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CAN YOU SEE ME? ETHNOGRAPHY OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH  
HOMELESSNESS IN DENVER, COLORADO

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A Thesis

Presented to  
the Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Taylor Morrison

August 2017

Advisor: Alejandro Cerón

Author: Taylor Morrison

Title: CAN YOU SEE ME? ETHNOGRAPHY OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH HOMELESSNESS IN DENVER, COLORADO

Advisor: Alejandro Cerón

Degree Date: August 2017

## **ABSTRACT**

Following the economic crisis in 2008, the United States, and Denver in particular, saw a considerable rise in the number of people considered homeless. Despite an increase in the population, little anthropological research has been done to understand the experiences of street-embodied individuals and the services available to them. Through participant-observation, life-history interviews, and photovoice, I closely studied the lives of two women experiencing homelessness and used interpretive phenomenological analysis to analyze the data. Analyzed through Foucault's biopolitics, technologies of the self, and panopticism, as well as Goffman's presentation of the self, I make the case that the homeless experience is marked by social exclusion, which I found to be internalized and resisted in the lives of two women in a variety of ways. These findings are relevant to service providers in the homeless industry, in the way they approach their interactions with people experiencing homelessness.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

On June 14, 2014, I sit at the back of the case manager's office at the Women's Emergency Shelter in Denver, Colorado where I am volunteering while doing my fieldwork. While one of the case managers finishes a meeting with a resident about her application for transitional housing, I read the incident log since I was last on shift. The staff logged acts of violence, disorderly conduct, vulnerability, and other issues that arise throughout the night with the residents. I note Veronica, one of my research participants, on the list of the women who have been kicked out for three days after a drunken altercation. The meeting concludes, and the case manager pulls out a tub of Lysol wipes to clean the chair the woman just vacated. I give the log to the case manager so she can record the woman's case details. I stand to make the rounds to see if anyone needs anything when Nicole, a Latina woman in her late thirties, asks permission to enter the office. Frazzled, she enters but does not take a seat. Nicole looks through the tubs of toiletry items, grabbing a few tampons and stuffing them in her pocket. She makes to leave the room, but then turns back to me.

"Can you see me," Nicole asks, waving her arms up and down her body. "People been walking past me all day. And I'm just wondering, can you see me?"

I let out a sympathetic sigh and reply, "yeah, I see you."

Nicole's eyes water as she asks, "why don't they see me?"



## **Nature of Project**

Whether through the use of park benches and streets, public restrooms, or shelters, homeless individuals are relegated to living out their lives in public. At the same time, the experience of homelessness is also marked by social exclusion and feelings of invisibility, as illustrated above in the excerpt from my field notes. Of the 4,904 homeless people living in Denver at the time of this research from 2013 to 2014, 34 percent were women (Denver's Road Home 2013). With the majority of services available catering to women with children and families, unaccompanied homeless women are among the most vulnerable of the street-embodied population.

This research project investigates how unaccompanied homeless women experience the social exclusion that accompanies homelessness. I contribute to furthering anthropological discussions on the topic of homelessness through an intimate study of two women's experiences while living at the Women's Emergency Shelter in Denver, Colorado. Furthermore, this project provided a platform for these women's life stories to be shared and heard with photovoice and a collaborative photography exhibit in an effort to empower them and resist the social exclusion associated with being homeless.

## **Justification**

At the time of my fieldwork in 2014, Denver was in the ninth year of its ten-year plan, Denver's Road Home (DRH), to provide services and shelter to individuals who find themselves homeless in an effort to end unnecessary sleeping on city streets. As a part of their eighth year of planning, DRH focused on developing the services available to women. In collaboration with VOA, DRH opened the Women's Emergency Shelter,

creating 60 more available “beds” for unaccompanied women (Denver's Road Home 2013).

Social scientists have given considerable attention to the study of homelessness following the various economic crises in American history. The bulk of anthropological research on homelessness and homeless women was completed during 1990-2003, focusing primarily on gender, identity, and political economy of the housing industry (Dehavenon 1996). Since then, the United States endured a wide-reaching financial crisis and a collapse of the housing market. Thus, my research contributes to anthropological discussions on the experience of homelessness following the more recent economic crisis of 2008.

### **Overview of Thesis**

Chapter Two: Background will provide brief historical contextualization of homelessness in the United States, showing the scope of the problem to date. I discuss the policy that shapes the social exclusion of homelessness and overview the magnitude of homelessness in Denver. The chapter concludes with a description of the Women's Emergency Shelter. In Chapter Three: Literature Review, I discuss the relevant anthropological and social science research on homelessness, as well as the conceptual framework employed in analysis. Chapter Four: Project Design, provides the research question, details the study population and the recruitment process, and describes the methods used during data collection and analysis. The next two chapters, Chapter Five: Jessica and Chapter Six: Veronica, are the results chapters which narratively detail the two project participants and their experiences with homelessness. In Chapter Seven: Analysis and Discussion, I present the findings from the two results chapters interpreted

through the theoretical framework and in discussion with the literature reviewed in Chapter Three: Literature Review. The final chapter, Chapter Eight: Conclusion, remarks on the main takeaways from my findings, limitations of this study, my reflections on the research experience, and implications of the findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will introduce the background for my research. First, I will provide the overview of homelessness in the United States and Denver. Next, I contextualize the latest response to homelessness in Denver with the nationwide movement to end homelessness. I will then include policies that pathologize and criminalize homelessness in the United States, Colorado, and Denver. Once I have presented the state of homelessness, I will provide background information on the particular site of my research, the Women's Emergency Shelter (WES). In doing so, I will include descriptive statistics of the women residing at WES and how WES was established. I will conclude with a physical description of WES and an overview of the nightly intake routine.

### **Overview of Homelessness in the United States**

Homelessness in the United States developed out of Industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to intermittent work opportunities, a massive transient workforce arose in urban centers, aided with the expansion of the railway system. Private and public housing was developed to accommodate the rise in urban workers (Arnold 2004). However, following the Great Depression in the 1930s, the lucrativeness of private housing developments waned, and the units were adopted into the public housing sector. As a result of the massive numbers of impoverished people after the Great Depression, a new

deservedness narrative emerged “between the new homeless and old, similar to the differentiation made today, in that the new homeless were blameless, while the old homeless were viewed as moral degenerates” (Arnold 2004, 91). In the 1970s, the deinstitutionalization of mental health institutions, combined with the massive decrease in Single Room Occupancy hotels, led to a massive increase in disenfranchised mentally ill persons experiencing homelessness (Ibid). Research at this time concentrated on identifying causes, or pathologies, of homelessness, which unfortunately contributed to the perpetuation of homeless stereotypes and myths that implicated the individual for their circumstance rather than institutionalized poverty (Ibid). In the 1980s, the United States experienced an economic downturn, coupled with the War on Drugs and the increase in incarceration (Ibid). American anthropology turned its attention inward to address domestic homelessness (Dehavenon 1996), attempting to use thick description and ethnography to combat stereotypic perceptions of homelessness. There has been an academic response to each of these influx periods of homelessness. My research fits within the trend of studying homelessness following economic crises.

### **Homelessness and Social Exclusion Policies**

The United States has historically maintained some form of social exclusionary laws to keep “undesirable” individuals from occupying highly-desirable and profitable public spaces. In 1937, Anti-Okie Laws banned bringing or helping poor people in relocating to California for agricultural labor. Following the introduction of Jim Crow laws in the South, many cities like San Francisco forced Chinese residents to live in a segregated community and required them to carry residence cards without which could

lead to arrest. “Ugly laws” spanning from 1867 to 1970 prohibited individuals with disabilities from existing or showing their face in public spaces. Until 1968, sundown towns banned minorities from being in public space after dark. Violators would be punished with verbal harassment, beatings, and/or lynching (WRAP 2014).

As a result of the collapse of the housing market and the subsequent stock market crash, Americans faced a rise in unemployment, increased impoverishment for marginalized segments of the population, and the loss of homes among the middle class. The Occupy Wall Street movement was born as a reaction to these experiences, becoming a nationwide protest. Common reactions out of this movement took the form of camping out in front of federal, state, and local government buildings and most famously, Wall Street (Steffen and Booth 2011).

The Denver City Council, in response to the high number of individuals camping in front of government buildings, passed the Unauthorized Camping Ordinance (UCO) that despite targeting protestors criminalized street-embodied individuals (Robinson 2013). Concurrently, the number of available shelter beds in Denver nowhere near met the number of street-embodied individuals in need of shelter. Street-embodied individuals were left with limited options beyond sleeping in the street while finding their survival practices considered criminalized behavior (Robinson 2013). The ordinance heavily burdened organizations already stretched thin in their services to provide more beds, as well as Denver’s Road Home who assisted in funding many of these agencies. While these policies are intended to clean up public spaces and move the homeless along, there have been tangible costs including "reduc[ing] the quality of life for homeless, it has

resulted in millions of spent taxpayer dollars for policing and jails, and it has catalyzed longer, more troubled spells of homelessness" (Robinson 2013, 10).

In response to these ordinances restricting the use of public space and promoting social exclusion, Denver's Homeless Out Loud worked to have House Bill 15-1264 introduced before the Colorado Legislature to establish a Homeless Bill of Rights. The bill's authors asked for the recognition of 5 rights without discrimination of housing status:

- (a) The right to use and move freely in public spaces without discrimination or time limitations that discriminate based on housing status;

- (b) The right to rest in public spaces and protect oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner;

- (c) The right to eat, share, accept, or give food in any public space where food is not prohibited;

- (d) The right to occupy a motor vehicle, provided that the vehicle is legally parked on public property or parked on private property with the permission of the property owner; and

- (e) The right to a reasonable expectation of privacy on one's personal property in public spaces to the same extent as personal property in a private residence or other private place (Robinson 2013, 11).

The sheer fact that individuals must lobby for these protections illustrates both the pathologization of homelessness in the United States and the less-than citizen status that homeless individuals become through their social exclusion.

### **State of Homelessness in Denver**

In September 2003, the Denver Homeless Planning Group, supported by the Denver Department of Human Services, issued "A Blueprint for Addressing Homelessness in Denver." In this report, the group called for a ten-year action plan to

“end chronic homelessness in Denver that will also address homeless prevention and the enhancement of services for populations with special needs” (Denver Homeless Planning Group 2003:4). Mayor John Hickenlooper signed Proclamation 53 in May 2005 officially supporting Denver’s Road Home, which was developed as the city’s ten-year “housing-first” provisional plan to transition homeless individuals into housing rather than resorting to penal practices (Robb 2008). Despite success in finding more space for beds and providing more services to homeless individuals, many of the projected goals at the onset of the plan have yet to be met. A fundamental limitation to the implementation of this ten-year plan was the inability to be prepared for the housing market collapse that began in 2007.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2014, US Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual Point-in-Time (PIT) survey counted 578,424 homeless people on a given night in January in the United States (2014). The PIT survey accounts for individuals and families sleeping in public space and shelters. HUD divides states into Continuums of Care (CoCs) for dispersal of grants and services to assist in ending homelessness. States are divided into CoCs on the county level, with urban centers represented by their own CoC. The remaining counties in the state are amalgamated into the Balance of State CoC. Within the balance of state, Local Homeless Coalitions (LHCs) are responsible for conducting and reporting their PIT survey data. A majority of the counties in the Balance of State CoCs are rural areas. Rural homelessness manifests itself very differently from urban homelessness. The methodologies that urban center CoCs use to conduct their PIT surveys must be restructured to fit broad geographical and diverse



environmental regions. LHCs are formed when a community identifies a need for assistance with homelessness in their community. Not all counties have LHCs, therefore not all counties conduct PIT surveys. It is easy to understand how the PIT survey count of the number of homeless people in the United States is an underrepresentation of the problem.

In the Denver Metro Area, the 2014 PIT survey reported 5,812 homeless people (MDHI 2014, vii). The following quote from the DHOL report highlights the unmet needs of homeless women:

As just one example of a severely unmet need, Denver has 1,792 homeless women (according to the 2012 MDHI count), but only about 275 shelter beds for these women. A count in 2011 showed that 850 women on any given night were competing for just 125 beds that were free each night. Crowds of women wait hours each day in queueing areas, hoping to win a lottery draw for a nightly bed - but in the end, more woman than not are turned away without shelter each night. Anxiety attacks, panicked fear and angry outbreaks are common as women wait in queueing areas for a space" (Robinson 2013, 16-17).

I witnessed this frustration first hand while volunteering at the Women's Emergency Shelter. My field notes are filled with observations that echo the sentiment of the quote from DHOL's report. The limited availability of shelter beds led to many fights while waiting in line. When the system was switched from first-come, first-serve to a lottery, the anxiety the women experienced did not go away; it was transformed. According to research done by Denver Homeless Out Loud, "in 1988 there were shelter beds available for 55% of Denver's homeless population; today shelter beds are available for only about 10% of this population" (Robinson 2013, 16).

## **Women's Emergency Shelter**

The site of my research, the Women's Emergency Shelter (WES), was operated by Volunteers of America. Volunteers of America has taken significant measures to make shelter services available to unaccompanied homeless women and men, to victims of domestic violence, and to homeless families. Founded in 1896, the Colorado Branch of Volunteers for America – a national, nonprofit religious organization – established service centers in Boulder, Denver, and Colorado Springs. By the early 20th century, the Colorado Branch provided clothing, food in the form of soup kitchens, and job assistance for homeless men and women with children (Volunteers of America Colorado Branch 2014).

In response to limited low-barrier winter shelter services for unaccompanied women, Denver's Road Home partnered with Volunteers of America in December 2012 to establish the Women's Emergency Shelter (WES). Originally intended to be a seasonal emergency response shelter, the overwhelming turnout led VOA and Denver's Road Home to make the WES a year-round shelter (Lindi Sinton, personal conversation, January 8, 2014) and in 2013 it provided shelter to 1,136 women alone (Volunteers of America Colorado Branch 2013).

### **WES Residents**

The WES shelter staff administered an anonymous paper survey nightly to the residents over the span of a week. Marsha, the shelter manager, designed the survey, collected the responses and analyzed the data. At our staff meeting in November, Marsha provided us with the results in the following tables:

What is your age?	
Below 30	6%
30-50	32%
50 and older	62%

Are you a veteran?	
Yes	11%
No	89%

What goals do you have for the future?	
Obtain employment	34%
Obtain housing	40%
Obtain SSI benefits	4%
Maintain safety	1%

How long have you been homeless?	
Under one year	40%
Over one year	60%

Do you have medical benefits?	
Yes	81%
No	19%

Why did you leave your last place?	
Rent affordability	61%
Substance abuse	0%
Family	9%
Loss of (lack of) employment	21%
Domestic violence	9%

*Figure 2.1: WES Resident Survey Data.*

While Marsha did not provide the number of responses analyzed, these descriptive statistics can be useful for understanding the general demographics of the residents of the Women's Emergency Shelter.

### Shelter Setting

The following section includes an overview of the nightly intake routine, a description of the WES layout, and the use of the various spaces.

The shelter opened at 5:30 p.m. daily. However, the line of women waiting to pick their preferred resting places began form at 4 p.m. The line started at the entrance and accumulated along the left side of the front of the building. Inside, the two case managers on staff, in addition to the director and the occasional volunteer, would work quickly to lay out 52 mats and set up the few available cots for disabled women. When the shelter was short-staffed, it would open closer to 6 p.m., which caused tension in the line of women waiting outside.

When the staff has finished setting up, one case manager worked the door checking off the names of repeat visitors and writing down new names. The director and the other case manager stood just inside the entrance. As the women entered the shelter, the case manager, volunteer(s), and the director handed each woman a sheet and a thicker blanket. WES did not permit the women to bring their own outside bedding because of the potential for bed bugs.

In the far back left room, couples of younger women in their late 20's to late 30's and their girlfriends and wives set up. The smaller room to the right divided from them by the coffee bar was designated for disabled women who could not sleep on the floor.

The few available cots and a small set of mats were situated in this room with the oldest residents occupying these cots. The cots at the front of the shelter near the entrance were for those who could not make it down the hallway to the designated room for disabled and senior women. Additionally, the more paranoid and scared women tended to situate themselves nearest the entrance because of its proximity to the case managers' office. In the small room in the right corner of the shelter, women who had never visited the shelter before situated themselves, along with a few of the women with dogs.

Women who arrived at the shelter last typically fill the spaces in the largest room. This room often had the most conflict because of the higher number of women close together for the night. When I handed out sandwiches in this room, I found it difficult to walk between the mats, often having to jump and balance myself to avoid stepping on their bedding. Later that evening, two women got into a heated argument because one woman's butt supposedly touched the other woman's sheets, causing her considerable concern. In response to this conflict, the director called the district police department. They make a routine visit each night. However, the director often calls in times of conflict to request their visit earlier rather than later. The police district sends out two officers to walk the premises. They do not engage the women, according to the director. Their role is to provide visible security for the officials.

Near the entrance, there were four chairs lined up outside the case manager's office. The shelter allowed two women outside at a time on a smoke break until the lights were turned off at 9 p.m. A large line formed near the entrance, beginning in these chairs and wrapping down the hallway. The smoking line seemed to be one of the greatest

sources of conflict. Many of the women felt upset over frequent cutting in line, in addition to some women being allowed out for more than one break before others had their first turn.

The case manager intake office was behind the wall where the smoke line forms. In this room, the bed linens are stored. There were also several shelving units filled with cleaning supplies and basic toiletries. The shelving units also contained a limited selection of clean underwear and socks available to the women. However, the women were not allowed into the office unless they waited at the doorway and asked for permission to enter. This policy was strictly enforced. The case managers attended to the women as they came to the doorway, mostly to request toiletry items. However, some women come in to talk about the status of their cases or to share a particular health or safety concern.

The food room was located behind the office, which was strictly prohibited from the women. The staff on duty kept it locked at all times. There were shelves inside the room filled with day-old food from the Seven-Eleven nearby. The director worked out an agreement to take the food one-day past expiration that would be discarded to provide to the women. Additionally, there were baskets of bruised fruit and a refrigerator full of bagged peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. When I first visited the shelter in January 2014, the women were very enthused about the recent acquisition of the Seven-Eleven donations. However, I found the women were reluctant to take food when I returned in April. Several of the couples in the back-left room expressed extreme disappointment in the food, citing experiences of food poisoning from expired foods they had consumed.

The coffee and tea bar in the back saw heavy traffic when the women first arrived after picking out their mats. Some women expressed the need to consume as much caffeine as possible so as to not fall asleep out of paranoia, while many used the hot water to make soups like ramen noodles. One woman who was a regular resident was well known for making specialty miso soups in Styrofoam coffee cups using the hot water. She would make at least six cups full of soup, and then walk around handing it out to the interested recipients.

The behavior was characteristic of the shelter from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. during the intake and preparation for lights out. I did not work an overnight shift in the shelter to be able to comment on post-lights off behavior. However, the night shelter staff told me that it things generally remain quiet after 9:00 p.m. until the women bag up their bedding, take their belongings, and leave by 6:30 a.m.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Scholars have taken various methodological and analytical approaches to understanding the homeless experience. The following chapter presents a review of relevant literature and the social theories that can be used to interpret the homeless experience. I begin with an overview of the early anthropological approaches to homelessness. This review is followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical framework employed in this thesis: Goffman's presentation of self and Foucault's panoptic city, biopolitics, and technologies of the self. The remainder of the chapter provides a thematic review of works that are engaged with Goffman and Foucault. In particular, I discuss dynamics of social interactions among homeless individuals and their social service providers, the varied forms of abuse homeless people are subject to experience, and the affective, emotional domain of homelessness. Additionally, I provide a brief review of literature that employs photovoice as a research method to understand the homeless experience. I conclude the chapter by connecting the thematic discussions with the theoretical perspectives.

### **Early Anthropological Approaches to Homelessness in the United States**

James Spradley's ethnography of self-proclaimed "tramp" men living on the streets in Washington was one of the earliest anthropological attempts to address



homelessness (1970). Spradley's linguistic analysis allowed him to identify the role of drunk tanks in reinforcing the perceived outcast identity of street people:

With each repeated arrest they may have less to lose, less which binds them to the larger society. For most men, the stripping process works more deeply each time until finally, the alienation has become permanent, and their personal identities are thoroughly spoiled for a meaningful life anywhere except the tramp world. And thus our institutions perform a rite of passage for these men, moving them out of the larger society and transforming their identities without providing a way for them to move back again or to alleviate the sting of rejection (1970, 255).

To survive the streets, men must adopt survival strategies that often result in an acceptance of their shared "spoiled identities" with other "tramp" men. Shared consumption of alcohol becomes a tactic for male bonding that only perpetuates the cycle.

The most substantial body of literature on homelessness in the United States emerged as a trend in the discipline primarily as a result of the American Anthropological Association's Task Force on Poverty and Homelessness. This Task Force, which aimed to employ anthropological research tools in the study of the rapidly developing housing crisis of the 1980s (Dehavenon 1996). Many of these early works focused on the gendered experiences of homeless individuals as well as the political economy of the housing industry (Susser 1996). For example, Joanne Passaro (1996) interviewed 200 homeless men and 178 homeless women in New York City from 1990 to 1993. Passaro found that male homelessness can be interpreted as a rejection of hegemonic gender norms. Conversely, female homelessness is not viewed as an individual inability to perform normative gender roles. Rather, female homelessness is a characteristic of meek, feeble femininity that is dependent upon a masculine support system. Passaro argued that

ignoring the overwhelming number of women escaping domestic abuse allowed for the persistence of female homelessness in New York City (1996).

Elliot Liebow's ethnographic research with single, homeless women in Washington D.C. is divided into two parts that descriptively detail the daily living conditions and highlight their coping strategies within their experiences (1993). Through depicting the women's daily struggles to find and then keep jobs, Liebow is able to support his claim that unchecked free market systems do not provide "minimally decent jobs" that can sustain rental payments on affordable housing units. Liebow foregrounds the women's experiences attempting to exit homelessness in their day-to-day interactions with service providers. The author identifies that many women feel they are infantilized by well-meaning service providers and constantly struggle to maintain aspects of their pre-homeless identities (1993). Liebow provides readers with the opportunity to read notes made in the margins by service providers and homeless women who read drafts of the text. Through this engagement with the subjects of his research, readers can glimpse into the process of his ethnography as well, sharing the narrative voice with his participants.

Meanwhile, Vincent Lyon-Callo (2000) analyzed the "not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY)" public discourse opposing human services and public perceptions of homelessness in the late 1990s. The author performed ethnographic and media-based research at and surrounding the debate of a homeless shelter in Northampton, Massachusetts from 1993 to 1998. Through disclosing descriptive statistics in funding reports and identifying skills needed to "handle" the shelter population in job postings,

shelter staff unknowingly made public information that opponents to the shelter used to justify their opposition. Those opposed to the shelter cited past violent experiences with homeless drunks and vagrants as reasons why they did not want this particular shelter at this particular location. While insisting they support homeless people, opponents also denounced a NIMBY label. Through his analysis, the author identified that the opponents felt their neighborhood was strategically targeted out of disrespect and ambivalence by city officials. Lyon-Callo was able to show “that the notion of ‘the homeless’ as a discursive category consisting of deviant, homeless people in need of professional reform and retraining was re-produced and reinforced through these well-meaning efforts by the sheltering industry” (2000, 203-204).

### **The Homeless Identity**

In Erwin Goffman’s conceptualization of the self, there lies a differentiation between one’s internalized view of their self and the way that self is publically performed and interpreted in social contexts (McCarthy 2013, 51). For individuals experiencing homelessness, the permeation of the homeless stereotype creates a tension in their ability to negotiate what Goffman called “impression management” in performance with other social actors (McCarthy 2013). McCarthy writes:

An understanding of Goffman (1959) highlights the constant renegotiation and re-presentation of different social roles depending on social context and interaction. This is of great significance when thinking through identity-work among people experiencing homelessness... ‘Homelessness’ should not be taken to mean a constant defining attribute. At different times of the day, in different contexts, with different people, individuals might align more with any other attribute: whether that is their gender, sexuality, their role as a mother or father (2013, 55).

Despite the confining and constricting nature of a shelter or public space, it is possible for people experiencing homelessness to negotiate their multitude of identities at a given time.

Snow and Anderson (1987) found that fictive storytelling, embracement, and distancing are three key ways homeless individuals socially engage in presenting their identities. Heavily influenced by Goffman, Snow and Anderson also apply impression management in describing these three practices. For the authors, fictive storytelling involves “an embellishment of the past and present and fantasizing about the future” (1987, 1359). In choosing to embellish elements of one’s identity, Snow and Anderson suggest individuals attempt to assert how they desire to be perceived. By fantasizing, the authors mean a future projection of one’s self that is somehow disconnected from one’s past and present personas. Embracement entails the acceptance and an entering into the social identity. One way embracing could be manifested for homeless individuals is in looking out for other homeless companions. Finally, distancing serves to do just that—distance oneself from the prevailing stereotypes of homelessness. One example of distancing that the authors provide is distinguishing oneself as higher in the social order from other “stereotypical” homeless individuals (Snow and Anderson 1987).

Continuing off the groundwork laid by Snow and Anderson (1987), Boydell, Goering, and Morell-Bellai (2000) address identity management within a temporal context. Through analyzing interview transcripts, the authors identified key themes of how homeless individuals identified themselves before they were homeless, during their homelessness, and their vision for after exiting homelessness. Key findings include the

presentation of a past self as a source of pride that is now lost, framing one's present self in an overly positive manner, limited emotional support leading to a lowered sense of self-worth, identity hierarchy as a coping mechanism, and the hope for identity transformation in the future.

### **Foucault: Panopticism and Technologies of Self**

Street-embodied women live in public space, a result of being without adequate personal shelter. Aside from private moments made possible in secluded spaces – for example, stalls in public restrooms and nooks in alleyways – they use public transportation, sleep on bed rolls next to other women in shelters, spend their days in the public library or at public parks and pedestrian malls. There is an inherent panoptic nature to how these women navigate the city in passing tall, mirrored buildings, shops with storefront windows, and security cameras (Foucault 1977).

In the context of this research, I employ Foucault's definition of panoptic (1977) in the sense that women experiencing homelessness are observed, surveyed, and scrutinized in such a manner that it is unclear who is doing the watching and what the implications of such surveillance are. The unseen but somehow acknowledged presence of an often-unidentifiable surveying gaze causes those subjected to such observation to internalize the fear of being observed. This embeds a power dynamic into the relationship between street-embodied women and the city as an entity and as a collective of individual passersby.

Biopolitics is another Foucauldian concept that is relevant to the discussion of homelessness. Foucault (1988) explains that the rise of collecting biological data on

populations was accompanied by a form of power that is manifested in institutional management, discipline, and order of populations. Biopolitics transforms biological bodies into political entities, or citizens, upon which sociopolitical domination and control can be exerted (Foucault 1988). In her book, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity*, Kathleen Arnold (2004) takes up a Foucauldian approach to analyzing homelessness within the larger context of citizenship and political identity. Arnold conducted fieldwork at a homeless shelter in Massachusetts in 1990, informing a number of her conceptualizations throughout the text. However, Arnold primarily contextualizes historical and current events within the greater Foucauldian framework she conceptualizes for the reader. For Arnold, pathologized biological bodies that do not conform to the normalized behaviors of a given society become Otherized, losing their political citizenship as well (2004). When applied to homelessness, Arnold argued that:

[t]he homeless have been made a political Other that defines the construction of political identity and social inclusion. The paradigm of the homeless as dirty, uncontrollable, disaffiliated, and unpredictable represents an ambiguity or undecidability within the political context of the modern nation-state. This demonstrates a norm of citizenship that is really an essentialized identity, tied to notions of economic self-sufficiency, responsibility, and rationality (Arnold, 2004, 127).

Tied to the notion of biopolitics, Foucault (1988) later explain the ways in which individuals practice forms of self-actualization through what he terms “technologies of self.” In other words, technologies of self can be seen as the varied ways individuals both understand themselves and perform selfhood by controlling their behavior and bodies.

In his research on the AIDS epidemic in Brazil, Joao Biehl (2005) critically evaluates the nation’s attempt to provide universal access to AIDS treatments. From 1992 to 2001, Biehl conducts interviews and participant-observation at an AIDS hospice

facility in Cassah. During fieldwork, Biehl notices the ways in which socially excluded individuals are also excluded from accessing much-needed healthcare. One of the theoretical perspectives the author uses is Foucault's biopolitics to formulate what he called "technologies of invisibility:"

As I found out in my ethnography, bureaucratic procedures, informational difficulties, sheer medical neglect and moral contempt, and unresolved disputes over diagnostic criteria all mediate the process by which people are turned into "absent things." And I began to call these state and medical procedures and actions technologies of invisibility (2005, 264).

Parker and Fopp (2004) interviewed 20 women who returned to a women's shelter in Adelaide, South Australia as a result of an inability to sustain their living arrangements. The authors used Foucault's technologies of domination and self as an analytic framework in interpreting their results. Parker and Fopp found that women internalized their homelessness through self-policing, whereby they blamed themselves for homelessness. However, in the same conversations that women would blame themselves, they also would show an awareness of the structural forces shaping their situations. The authors identified a theoretical limitation of Foucault's technologies when interpreting their data in that they felt Foucault did not make affordances for individual agency in the concept of technologies of self.

### **Service Providers and the Homeless**

Jean Williams (1996) details acts of resistance exerted against shelter staff methods of control through surveillance. Inherent in the shelters of the Southwest that Williams studied from 1994 to 1995 is the requirement to divulge personal and private information in order to access social services and shelter. Through surveillance of space and retention of personal information, order within the physical space of the shelter is

maintained. Furthermore, the unmet housing needs of others awaiting shelter services serves to enforce rule adherence from those who have shelter. Everyday forms of resistance identified through participant-observation and semi-structured interviews include demanding respect from service providers, utilizing shelter resources while simultaneously refusing to recognize the shelter in their attempt to escape homelessness, and through “participation in constructing other homeless people as ‘undeserving’” (Williams 1996, 104). An important distinction that Williams identifies is the significant stress that women experienced from both an absent case manager and one a case worker who blames the individual rather than the structures shaping her homelessness.

In performing qualitative analysis on over 600 interviews of homeless individuals’ experiences accessing social services in Portland, Oregon, Hoffman and Coffey (2008) found that experiences could be categorized into both positive and negative conditions of the services accessed and positive and negative staff encounters. The authors found that an overwhelming portion of homeless clients felt infantilized and objectified by service providers. In terms of infantilization, the authors recount instances where homeless individuals felt “as though they were being treated ‘as children’ with control, unequal power relationships, disrespect, and an abuse of authority by shelter staff” (Hoffman and Coffey 2008, 213). They further identified that in an effort to “hold on to their humanity and dignity,” shelter residents would exert their agency by exiting the social service system (Hoffman and Coffey 2008, 215).



## **Abuses**

Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schoenfield's seminal ethnography of homeless heroin addicts, based on fieldwork from 1994 to 2006 in San Francisco, reframes the everyday experience of homelessness and addiction through what he called "lumpen abuse" (2009). Drawing on Aa combination of symbolic violence, political-economy, habitus, and biopower, the concept of lumpen abuse in the lives of the study participants "embodies the abusive dynamics that permeate all their relationships, including their interactions with individuals, families, institutions, economic forces, labor markets, cultural-ideological values, and ultimately their own selves" (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, 19). Lumpen abuse is depicted through the ten years' worth of detailed descriptions of daily interactions on the themes of communal addiction strategies, love, domestic violence and family dynamics, income generation, and recovery strategies. Drug use can be a mechanism for social connection among those experiencing social exclusion. Bourgois and Schoenfield identify the ways in which their participants internalized moral judgments and responsibility for their situations, despite the role of social structures and political forces in the participants' lives. The authors also apply Mauss's concept of gift-giving and reciprocity to explain needle-sharing and survival strategies through withdrawal symptoms. The reader is left with a clear understanding of the sociopolitical forces that encompass the lumpen abuse experienced by the homeless individuals:

The U.S. neoliberal political-economic model of capitalism— free markets protected by law enforcement and military intervention, for the benefit of corporate monopolies with minimal redistribution of income and social services for the poor— has

obviously exacerbated homelessness...The wars on drugs, crime, and terrorism tipped the balance of governmentality toward physical repression rather than strategic, population level interventions. Biopower had become more abusive, and less productive and protective, for increasing numbers of people like the Edgewater homeless (2009, 363).

Where Bourgois and Schoenfield (2009) focus more on structural abuse that permeates the lives of their participants, Wesely and Wright (2005) evaluate domestic abuse in shaping women's experiences of entering homelessness during 2003 to 2004. Their research uses both in-depth interviews and an additional focus group with six women in an undisclosed urban center in the United States. The authors found that childhood experiences of extreme poverty, neglect, abuse, and other trauma shaped the participants' adult relationships that ultimately lead to their homelessness. As Wesely and Wright explain:

The women entered into initial adult relationships for multiple reasons (often related to childhood issues) – to escape the home environment, to prove to themselves and others that they could 'do it right,' to achieve what they discerned as safety, security, comfort, or love. Very rarely however did their adult relationships meet the women's expectations (2005, 1089).

For the women of the study, entering into these relationships only further exacerbated their economic vulnerability and exclusion from social networks, which more often than not began in early childhood.

### **Affective Experiences of Homelessness**

Mary Partis (2003) aims to understand the lived emotional experience of hope among the homeless individuals living in a cold-weather shelter in London. To do so, Partis employs a phenomenological approach to interviewing women experiencing homelessness. In her findings, Partis identified expectations for a better future to be a

driving force in the production of hope among homeless. Through a sense of feeling connected to others, homeless individuals could maintain hope in their journey. In identifying threats to maintaining hope, Partis wrote that “all respondents identified devaluation of human beings and degrading or belittling comments as a threat to their ability to sustain hope” (2003, 15). Furthermore, participants in the study identified the therapeutic value in sharing their experiences with homelessness through the interviews.

Daya and Wilkins (2012) found that the two homeless men in South Africa they studied found a renewed sense of belonging at the shared space of the bar they frequented together. The authors interviewed seven shelter residents, later focusing in on two men in particular. Additionally, the authors utilize body books as a research method to locate the body and embodied experience at the center of their research. In their body books, the men participating in the study logged the bodily manifestations of their day-to-day feelings. Through these techniques, Daya and Wilkins found that the men of the study exercised control over their systematically-constrained bodies by both physically going to the bar and partaking in communal consumption alcohol to feel a sense of emotional comfort and belonging.

### **Photovoice and Homelessness**

In recent years, photography as a participatory research method has served to shift power dynamics between the researcher and the researched. Walsh, Rutherford, and Kuzmak (2010) applied the method of photovoice to understand how women experiencing homelessness conceptualized the meaning of home. While the authors provide the reader with their research question to understand the conceptualization of

home, this article is instead a review of method effectiveness. The authors used a variety of other participatory qualitative research methods to triangulate the affective, physical, and external conceptualization of home, including digital storytelling, creative writing, design charrette, and qualitative interviewing. In evaluating their use of photovoice as a method, the authors found that it was useful for capturing affective and physical attributes of their experiences with homelessness. Many women did not take photographs of characteristics of home as requested. Instead, participants used the cameras to describe their experience with homelessness, which the authors identified as a limitation.

Utilizing the photovoice research method, Bukowski and Buelow (2011) provided New Zealand homeless women with cameras to depict their experiences with health and safety while homeless. To analyze the photographs, the authors coded the photographs and corresponding interviews associated with the photos. In doing so, the authors identified four main themes including health problems, familial support, social services support, and difficulty getting out of homelessness among others. Documenting threats to health and sanity, one woman in the study photographed a public toilet that she frequently used to take a bath. Photographs and interviews revealed the development of intimate friend groups as a method for survival on the streets. Women also attached familial bonds to companion dogs, which also offered a sense of protection from the streets. Photographs also showed an appreciation for the diminishing social services that directly helped women, with several women taking photographs of service provider facilities to capture their existence before they were gone. Women also discussed overcrowding in shelter facilities as a driving reason for why they would return to the

streets. For Bukowski and Buelow (2011), like Walsh, Rutherford, and Kuzmak (2010), found that the strengths of the research method lie in the ability to give the participants the camera, and thus the opportunity to advocate for themselves.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a review of relevant literature to this thesis. Early anthropological approaches to understanding homelessness involved thick description to combat stereotypes of homelessness, along with analyses of public perceptions of homelessness, gendered experiences and interactions with shelter staff. From these works, we learn that homeless individuals represent a wider range of the population than previously believed, including women and children. From the literature reviewed in this chapter, it has been identified that people experiencing homelessness interpret their status in a variety of ways. In recent years, photovoice as a participatory research method has been incorporated into research with homeless individuals to negotiate power dynamics between the researcher and the researched, as well as to gain unexplored insights into the lives of socially excluded individuals. To interpret the results of this thesis, I combine Foucauldian theories of surveillance and biopolitics with Goffman's presentation of the self to understand the relationship between the power dynamics of the public gaze and its manifestation in the lives of unaccompanied homeless women.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESIGN**

In this chapter, I present the project design of this research. I will outline the research questions, explain how I employed the selected methods, rationalize the methodology behind the use of such an approach, reflect on the ethical considerations involved in developing such a project, and explain the data analysis process I used.

### **Research Question**

One primary research question drove my project design:

1. What is the lived experience of unaccompanied homeless women seeking shelter at the Women's Emergency Shelter in Denver?

### **Study Population**

For this project, I wanted to work with homeless individuals. The reason for this was twofold: (1) I believed an applied anthropological perspective could highlight issues faced by marginalized groups in a way that would not exploit the population; and (2) I felt it was important to use an anthropological perspective to distinguish the homeless population from the homogeneous stereotypes commonly depicted in news media. From a previous interest in the topic, I knew the federal, city, and state predominately allocated resources to veterans, families, women with children, and men. Therefore, I chose homeless women without children as my study population.

Through meetings with a representative from Denver's Road Home, it was suggested I research the Women's Emergency Shelter because it was new, having opened in December 2012. Therefore, I decided to I work with the unaccompanied women who utilized the Volunteers of America Women's Emergency Shelter for nightly shelter services. Of the limited number of shelters that specifically cater to women without children, the Women's Emergency Shelter had limited institutional barriers to access a bedroll for the night. Many of the women who used the shelter had severe mental health disorders, exhibited aggressive behavior and/or were unstable, and therefore were unable to give informed consent to participate in the research. Through collaboration with the case workers on staff and spending several nights each week volunteering at the shelter, I was able to identify those women who could participate in my research.

### **Recruitment and Consent**

I restricted participation in this study to unaccompanied homeless women who accessed the Volunteers of America Women's Emergency Shelter and who could cognitively give informed consent from an IRB perspective. Before any research began, the shelter manager invited me on to her team of volunteer case managers. She communicated with the staff and the women that I was a graduate student doing a research project on the shelter. We worked together to explain to the women that I could not include them in the study without prior consent. Several of the women were initially skeptical of my intentions.

I worked four nights a week for three-hour shifts during intake when the shelter opened and during dinner sack lunch distribution. As a result, I was able to observe the

shelter dynamics, identify women who were frequent residents, and start to establish trust-based relationships with several of the women. I also began to work with the shelter staff more closely to identify those with more severe mental illnesses that I should not approach about the study. During this time, I kept generalized field notes so as not to document women's experiences that did not wish to be a part of the project.

From the relationships I built by being a volunteer case manager from April to July, I began to identify potential project participants. Before providing the participants with disposable cameras, I briefly described the goals and purposes of the project, in addition to the minimal risks associated with the project. I obtained verbal informed consent at the start of the project, before providing the first disposable camera and again before interviewing each woman.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In my research and writing, it is of the utmost importance that I protect my informants. This study adhered to the approved IRB protocol in obtaining informed consent and protecting participant confidentiality. In addition to confidentiality concerns, I took measures to avoid exploiting the limited privacy of women who live their lives in public space by strictly adhering to a collaborative approach to our discussions. I avoided interviewing at night in the shelters, as this encroached on their brief opportunity to sleep in a safe environment. I gave the women the control to set the terms of the interviewing will help avoiding exploitation of privacy, meeting Veronica at McDonalds, Jessica at The Gathering Place day shelter, and Carmen at the Denver Public Library.



## **Methods**

I used participant-observation and life history interviews to understand their lived experiences while seeking shelter at the Women's Emergency Shelter in Denver.

Furthermore, in an attempt to shift the agency to the women while also empowering them, I used photovoice to provide them with a platform for their stories with a photography exhibit.

### **Participant-Observation**

My primary research method was participant-observation, performed from April to December 2014. This qualitative method of both participating and observing in social activities occurred at the Women's Emergency Shelter and in urban Denver. To establish rapport with the women at the Women's Emergency Shelter and to identify which women could cognitively give informed consent, I began by volunteering three nights a week.

According to previous works on homelessness, it is not uncommon that homeless individuals, regardless of their mental health situations, experience mild to severe paranoia (Susser 1996). Thus, it was important that I spent time building relationships with and gaining trust from the women who sought shelter at WES. This first phase of research was unobtrusive and mainly resulted in the observation of space, shelter staff-resident dynamics, and patterns of behavior within WES. By building rapport, I was able to identify women who may be capable of giving informed consent (see Appendix A).

## Photovoice

As defined by Walsh, Rutherford, and Kuzmak, photovoice is “the combination of photographs with descriptions of the photographs written by the photographer, allowing for a personal description of one’s life or experiences” (2010, 196). In my endeavor to understand the lived experiences of these women, I incorporated photovoice in my project design. Instead of me subjecting the women to the embedded authority of my photographic gaze, I provided ten women with their first disposable camera. I had only three women complete the project, in part due to the transient nature of the population, a lack of interest in the project, or due to theft of the camera and a hesitancy to continue. My goal with this was to allow the women to visually document their lived experiences to tell their stories.

When each of the three women used up the first camera’s 24 exposures, I had the pictures developed for her. When I gave the women their first set of images, we sat down together to look through each of them, discussing the pictures that were most important to them and why. This conversation took between fifteen minutes and two hours, depending on the woman and the climate of the shelter that evening.

After providing the first pictures to the three women who expressed a vested interest in the project, all three women wanted to continue with the project. The same process that followed the distribution of the first camera occurred after the second camera, where I gave them a third and final camera. After I had the photographs developed from the final camera, I performed the same review of the photographs, in addition to a look back at their previous photos. During this conversation, I worked with

the women to select ten photographs to be used in an exhibition at the University of Denver's Museum of Anthropology (DUMA). Through coordination with DUMA, this exhibit took place over four weeks beginning in March 2015. I provided the women with transportation so that they may view their photographs on display at DUMA. I believe the photovoice project and its accompanying exhibit effectively provided a platform for the women to share their life experiences beyond their words. The women retained their photographs and negatives, while I kept a digital copy of the prints as consented to through signing the photograph consent form (see Appendix B).

#### Life History Interviews

Upon establishing rapport with the women through volunteer work at WES and the photovoice project, I conducted life history interviews. The goal of this method was to learn more about these women, gain indirect insight into how they became homeless, and to better understand their socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Life history interviews are particularly useful to interpret how individuals view themselves in a wider social context. These interviews began with casual conversation and transitioned with open-ended questions. I did not adhere to a rigid interview structure. Instead, I let the women tell their stories and experiences as they wished. Through acknowledging their authority to dictate the terms of the interview, I hoped to develop more rapport that translates into a willingness to speak openly about their lived experiences. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. I audio recorded Jessica and Veronica's interviews and took handwritten notes of Carmen's interview. It was during the middle of the

photovoice portion of the project detailed above that I scheduled one-on-one life-history interviews with each of the three women who were actively participating.

I tried to meet Carmen to do her life-history interview at the public library, but she did not show up three times. On the fourth time, I sent her a reminder text message the morning of the meeting. Before we began the interview, I re-explained informed consent and asked if I could record the interview. Carmen's persona immediately shifted as she explained that she did not feel comfortable with me audio-recording her life history interview. As a result, I took handwritten notes during her interview. The interview was thirty minutes long compared to Veronica and Jessica's interviews that were an hour and two hours long respectively. In preparing to do qualitative analysis, I realized I did not have enough of the same kind of material to write a comparable chapter to the other two women. As a result, I chose to exclude Carmen's life history interview and photographs from the results and analysis of this thesis. While not featured in the thesis, Carmen did actively participate in the curation of her photographs for the exhibit.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

To analyze the data I collected, I transcribed the interview recordings and typed up the associated interview notes. I also typed up my field journal with my field notes from volunteering at the shelter. Additionally, I put all photographs taken by each woman in chronological order in power point presentations with the notes and direct quotes that I had about each photograph. I combined the particular field notes about each woman from my volunteer observation journal with the life history interviews of each woman. I printed the power-points of each woman's photographs and comments, along with all

interview text and field notes. I then followed the six-step methods of interpretive phenomenological analysis presented by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) in

*Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method, and Research*:

## 2. Reading and Re-reading

During this initial stage of analysis, I thought of each woman's data as an individual case. I took the printed materials from each woman's case and read through the interview text and field notes, as well as performing a reading of the photographs and accompanying text. In this process of multiple read-throughs, I began to identify story-telling patterns and the trajectory of each woman's story.

## 3. Initial noting

While I was doing multiple readings of the cases, I was also making initial notes on the paper copies. I began annotating in three specific categories that included linguistic, descriptive, and conceptual comments (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009, 84). These notes that included highlight repetitive words and phrases used, providing context for what was being discussed, and identifying what I interpreted to be important, to hold significance, or to concern the women and my initial reason for why. I revisited the digital versions of the transcripts and cut the sections of text that I had made conceptual notes for into a new document. I then made a new set of notes with the excerpted text to identify any additional linguistic, descriptive, and conceptual notes that emerged.

## 4. Developing emergent themes

Through the process of creating an additional set of notes from the excerpted text, I began to identify emergent themes within each woman's case. I created a separate set of

notes that listed each of the emergent themes with a definition of what I meant by that theme and excerpts that exemplified the theme.

#### 5. Searching for connections across emergent themes

To look for connections in the emerging themes, I used the process of physically sorting themes into categories. I wrote the name of each of the emergent themes onto a note card. I then shuffled the cards and began to sort them by laying them out on a table based on any identifiable ways to group the themes together. Some of the emergent themes were examples of a larger theme. This process of sorting, or looking for connections, allowed me to refine the emergent themes into more solidified themes. I then wrote a description of each of the solidified themes and extracted associated excerpts.

#### 6. Moving to the next case

Once I completed steps 1-4 for the first woman's case, I moved on to the other woman's data to analyze.

#### 7. Looking for patterns across cases

While each woman's case study provided interesting insights into their individual lived experiences of homelessness while living at WES, I knew I needed to look for any commonalities across their narratives for my analysis to be an anthropological analysis of homelessness. To find patterns, I repeated the same process I performed in step 4, however I used all of the solidified themes from each woman's narrative on the note cards to complete this review. Once I had identified any recurrent themes, I created another set of notes that indicated a description of the theme with examples from each case that shared the theme.

## CHAPTER FIVE: JESSICA

"The parent will look at you in the strange with the nose up in the air look. The kids will turn around and look with the same thing. And I asked Veronica, 'what you think they be telling they kids about the homeless?'"

*What do you think they tell them?*

"Something bad like 'Oh, don't say nothing to them. Don't look at them.'  
Something cruel and mean."



*Figure 5.1: Portrait of Jessica.*

## **First Encounter**

One Tuesday night in May 2014, I was volunteering at WES handing out bedding to the women as they entered the shelter. Several of the women in line were particularly vocal about their disappointment with the scratchy blanket options we had available. When Jessica came up in the line to get bedding, she was shaking her head at the woman in front of her who was frustrated with her blanket. As I gathered Jessica's bedding, I asked her if a bundle of extra pillow cases rolled up in a pillow case would work for her as a pillow since we were out. Jessica joked with me, "Honey, I'm still waiting on my Sleep Number mattress. That'll be just fine."

Laughing with her, I asked her if she needed anything else.

"If you've got a new bra to hold in these big gals of mine, I wouldn't say no," Jessica teased back.

I had already inventoried our clothing supply before we opened the shelter that night, so I shook my head to say no. "What size are you," I asked, "I'll see what I can come up with."

WES received clothing donations from time to time. But because of the limited supply, we tried to keep them in case of emergencies only. Many women were discharged straight from the hospital and brought directly to the shelter without any clothes, so we tried to avoid handing out the donations to our regular clients when possible.

The following week, I brought two boxes of donations my stepmom mailed me from her church collections. I had overheard Jessica continue to complain about her bra underwire poking her sides and her bra straps cutting into her shoulders. I called her over



into the supply room to let her look at the bras my stepmom sent to see if one of them would fit. Jessica was so happy to find one that she “could make work better than the one [she] had.”

After giving Jessica the bra she needed, we chatted more often. One night at the end of May 2014, Jessica was out on a smoke break when I stepped outside to answer a call from my mom. I did not usually answer phone calls at the shelter, but my grandfather’s terminal brain cancer made me nervous any time my mom called me more than once in an hour. When I finished the phone call, Jessica asked me if I was okay. I confided with her about my grandfather’s illness and the stress it placed on my mom.

While she finished her cigarette, she shared with me, “I used to take care of the elderly. I got my license for that. It expired, then I got sick. But I like helping people. Even though it’s tough. My daughter’s father was in the last stage of cancer when he passed away a few days before her birthday.”

I told her I was sorry to hear that, but she just shook her head dismissively and continued, “A couple of years before that, my father passed from cancer. That was my best friend.” She gave me a reassuring smile. “I get what your mom is going through.”

Since then, Jessica regularly checked in with me about my grandfather’s health, offering reassurances and kind words to pass on to my mom. In June, I told Jessica more about my research and asked if she wanted to be a part of the photovoice project. She agreed to participate, telling me she had nothing better to do.

## Interview

I sit across from Jessica at a table that is far too large for the tiny intake interview room at The Gathering Place. The day shelter is one of the few places where women experiencing homelessness can do laundry and take a shower. We meet here so Jessica can do laundry while we talk to avoid inconveniencing her daily routine. The room feels too formal for the interview, considering how close we have grown over the past four months. I note the tension she carries in her shoulders and the loud sigh she makes as she adjusts in her seat. I ask Jessica how she is doing today. She immediately starts in on her day in the slow, yet steadied, cadence that I have come to know to be uniquely Jessica.

"I'm so tired. I ain't have a good sleep. I got up at 4 o'clock Monday morning to get to DHS [Denver Human Services] because they only take the first 15 womens. They be running up there, so there be a line. At DHS, the first 15 get in Elati<sup>1</sup> automatically. A lot of people don't wanna go to Samaritan House for the 120-day stay because of their rules. So we stay in the lottery. There at DHS they don't have a lottery and they just put us on the list and let us go."

This is not the first time I have listened to Jessica express her frustration with the sign-up process to access shelter space at WES. Two weeks ago, we were looking through the photos she took when I came across one outside the shelter (Figure 5.2). When I asked her about the picture, she explained, "We stand in line from 4:00-6:00 and it be hot. I'm like wow. You gotta run to get there to get to the front of the line just to sit

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the women, including Jessica and Veronica, referred to WES as Elati due to the street on which the shelter was located.

and wait for hours so you can get the mat you want. They get into arguments, but we all gonna get in and get a spot.”



*Figure 5.2: Jessica took a picture of the women who arrive early to show the shelter manager that the changes to the sign-up process were not mediating the neighborhood complaint about the women’s midday loitering.*

Without pausing for an answer, Jessica asks me, “you know what I ate for dinner last night? An apple and a bag of chips. I don’t eat the bologna sandwiches you hand out.” I know this already because part of my volunteer duties include handing out whatever food donations we have. Because the shelter funding was established for an emergency shelter, we do not have a budget for food. The women are required to arrive for check-in beginning at 6:00 pm and they are not allowed to leave the premises outside of cigarette breaks once checked in. Thus, we usually hand out whatever donated food we

can get for their dinner. Jessica continues, “I’m a very picky eater. I only eat bologna if it’s fried and if it’s beef. I don’t eat that pork, chicken, beef mixed together. Nasty.”

Jessica laughs about the bologna until she sighs deeply and sets her glasses next to the tape recorder on the table. She wipes the stray tear rolling down her cheek and continues without meeting my gaze.

"If I’d known what I know now? I would have never left my grandkids and my daughter to come be with such a disrespectful man," Jessica exhales deliberately, her swollen, diabetic fingers tensely covering her mouth as she struggles between anger and exhaustion. “I wake up and go to bed thinking about them. I don’t know. I’m just tired.”

I do not know what to say to comfort her. I reach across the table and place my hand on her arm. She nods her head once, and a tight smile forms on her lips. Throughout our interview, I keep finding myself not knowing what to say. So, I listen to her story.

In 2008, Jessica met a man in a chat room. The two became close and dated in a long-distance relationship for five years. In July 2013, he convinced Jessica to move from New York City to Denver to live with him. Jessica was disabled and unable to continue working in home healthcare, on top of over-reaching herself financially to help her daughter care for children. A lifelong New Yorker, Jessica accepted his offer and left behind her daughter and three grandchildren in the hopes of a fresh start. Instead, she found herself without a roof over her head not even three months after relocating to Denver.

“We was staying with his mother for a while. His mom put him out. And I continued staying there for about two months,” she says.

I ask if she and his mother were close, and Jessica shakes her head. “At first, then she was hungry for money. I left October 1st of 2013. Since then, I been here and there.”

I ask Jessica where she went.

“A convent,” she explains. “I think they call it The Gift of Mary's? It's on Fox Street. I stayed there for 30 days.”

I had never heard of The Gift of Mary's, so I ask her to tell me about the shelter.

“It was nice. Get a home cooked meal every night,” she says sardonically. “You get a real bed. There's eight womens to a room. Just eight. Nothing like Elati.”

“Then in November [2013], I went to this other place,” she continues. “You know the lady that came to the shelter named Lynn? She runs a maternity house. It is four womens to a room. They got four beds upstairs. I went and stayed there about two-and-a-half months. It started out as a maternity place, but they came to The Gift of Mary's and talked to womens to see if they could help us. I guess the pregnant womens go to stay with a mother for mentoring in they house? I don't know.”

I ask her what she did after leaving The Gift of Mary's.

“I went to my ex[boyfriend]'s sister's house. She lived in Littleton. And that's how I ended up at [the shelter] in April [2014].”

“What happened at his sister's house?”

“She put me out after I didn't give her more money. I slept out in the streets at a bus stop in Littleton for like three or four nights,” Jessica explains a little too casually.

“What was that experience like,” I ask.

“Cold. Snowing. Raining,” she says pointedly. “Then I went to this laundromat on Littleton Boulevard to get out of the snow, and I fell asleep. The polices came and said that I couldn’t sleep in there. They said they don’t allow that. A couple people gave me money to get to Human Services (DHS) to sign up for a shelter. That’s how I ended up at Elati.”

“What was your first night like at the shelter?”

Jessica replies, “I didn’t know my way clearly around Denver. I was riding up and down the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall Free Mall Ride trying to find Elati. These girls took me all the way to the shelter. When I finally made it, I got there a couple of minutes late. I didn’t have a Denver ID. They didn’t let me in,” she says dropping her fist to the table in frustration. “They turned me away. They told me to come tomorrow and make sure I’m on time. I tried to explain to the lady that answered the door the situation. She didn’t want to hear.” Jessica shakes her head in disgust. “I made it on time the next night though.”

Jessica tells me about a growing frustration the residents have with the shelter staff when describing what happened to an elderly woman with mental health issues the previous night.

"You know that old lady, what’s her name? She got kicked out the other night, right?

“Ethel?” I offer.

“That’s her. You know why she got kicked out? She come in late, so she's up and down all night going to the bathroom and rustling through her bags. Instead of [the shelter staff] saying, ‘Ethel, could you please be quiet the lights is out?’ They talk to her

like she a five-year-old saying, ‘Shut up, the lights is out!’ And [Ethel] said, ‘You cannot talk to adult people the way y’all talk to them.’ They weren’t paying no mind to what she was saying. They told her to get her stuff and leave.”

I am not surprised to hear Jessica’s story. I had seen the shelter staff ask Ethel to leave before when I was on duty, and the circumstances were not all that different then.

“We seen [Ethel] this morning sleeping on the bench at the bus stop. Then she came here [The Gathering Place Day Shelter] to get breakfast,” Jessica continues. “Ethel was saying in the elevator, ‘you know they talk to us like we kids. We all adults.’ The majority of us is older than those staff persons. It’s sad and it’s crazy how they talk to adults like that. Then when you say something back to them, you gotta go.”

We continue to talk about the incident, when Jessica discloses her opinion of the staff person who asked Ethel to leave.

“A lot of people don’t like Debra. A lot of the clients don’t like her. She comes out every day when she’s there and she says, ‘okay ladies. We gonna respect each other, respect ourselves and respect the staff tonight, right?’ She treat us like kids. It’s crazy how they talk to adults like that.”

I ask Jessica how that type of language makes her feel.

“I’m the type that of person that I only let people belittle me for so long until I get defensive and start speaking up. I’m not gonna let no one talk to me the way they want to talk to me. Either I’m gonna speak up. Either you kick me out or,” she lifts her hands up in a shrug. “But I’m not a child.”

Jessica then tells me about her attempts to secure affordable housing.

“I’m tired. I’ve been filling out applications here, there. That lady’s been helping me though. What’s her name,” she asks.

“Brittany,” I offer.

“Yeah. And the lady from the Colorado Coalition? She’s been helping me but she’s so hard to get in contact with because she never answers her phone. She filled out a lot of applications with me, but she don’t tell me nothing. Then that makes it aggravating because these the people that supposed to be helping. They don’t do nothing. The way I feel right now is that they don’t care. They just there to do their job from 9-5 and then go home. They don’t think about what we wanna do. I got one eviction that I had on an apartment I had from the age of 19 to 40. That one eviction is holding me back from getting an apartment. I was in [my home] for 20 something years. That should be a plus that somebody stayed in an apartment for that long.”

I ask about her eviction.

“My eviction is for non-payment. I tried to talk to the people who I was renting from to pay the regular rent and pay a payment plan to pay the balance off. But they wouldn’t do that. I don’t want to be in this place in the winter time. I want to be in my own apartment so I can do whatever I want in my own. It’s sad. I’ve got diabetes and high blood pressure. This is not good. This is not helping.”

I have been helping Jessica keep her medication stored in the shelter’s locked office refrigerator, but the shelter policy is about to prohibit me from continuing to do so. I debate whether or not I should tell her now, or let the shelter staff tell her when they



begin enforcing the policy. Instead, I reply back “I imagine those day-old peanut butter & jelly sandwiches we hand out for dinner aren’t helping either.”

“You know,” Jessica whispers, “they had a recall on peanut butter. Makes me scared to eat those sandwiches.” She looks at me with her characteristically pointed gaze and chuckles.

Jessica tells me about an experience she had with Veronica and their group of friends last week in Civic Center Park. “We was at the marathon on Sunday. We was there. We was hungry. I mean hungry. We didn’t eat all day. And Veronica walked over to one of the trucks and explained to the man that she had 5 homeless friends sitting in the park that hadn’t ate. There usually be people coming around with sack lunches to the homeless in the park (Figure 5.3). They didn’t come around that day because of the event.



*Figure 5.3: “We usually go to the park for lunch because they hand out sandwiches. The line doesn’t take too long.”*

He said when finished selling his food he would see what he could do. Well there wasn't nobody coming by to buy nothing."

Jessica frequently expressed her frustration in the shelter about all of the summer activities in Civic Center Park. In particular, she would talk about how unfair it was that the events kicked people out of the parks to set up, which she documented using the cameras I provided (Figure 5.4).



*Figure 5.4: "I mean, he was passed out. I doubt they seen him sleeping there."*

I ask about the status of the latest housing application I know about.

"Oh, they sent me a letter. Guess how much you have to make a year to live there? \$18,000. Mine's a year is \$8,000. Not enough. But it's supposed to be low income HUD?" She shakes her head back and forth. "Every application I fill out, they deny. They don't even tell you the reason why. But I know why. It's cos I got an eviction."

Jessica abruptly changes the conversation when she shares with me, “I’m trying to get back in school. I got accepted to work on my GED and work on a business course. I do wanna open up a business that’s a building that helps the homeless. I been wanting to do this for a couple years, I just been putting it off and putting it off.”

I am surprised because this is the first time I have heard Jessica talk about goals for the future outside of securing housing. “Do they do GED courses here at The Gathering Place?”

Jessica makes a sound of disapproval. “I don’t like the teacher. They don’t start from the beginning. It jumps around each time. That’s not helpful. How somebody gonna learn? They don’t have GED books. They just have sheets they make up. I need an actual GED class. I supposed to be going to Red Rocks Community College. I gotta go over there to take the test to see what level I’m at.”

I tell Jessica I am proud of her for wanting to earn her GED. She tells me that Veronica told her about the Red Rocks Community College program that she attended and has been helping her navigate the process.

We take a break in the interview so Jessica can go change out her laundry. She returns quicker than I expected with an angry expression. “I’m getting tired of coming here,” she sighs. “You know some of the ladies that come here? They got they own apartment. They come here to eat. They don’t have no consideration. They’s so many womens that come here to go get breakfast that there don’t hardly be none because the ones that got they own place where they can cook comes here. They drink up all the coffee. The doors just open up and the coffee already gone. There’s no consideration.

They don't care. Although they been in the same situation, so they know how it is. But still, they don't care. That's what aggravates me. And it makes me frustrated. Nobody have sympathy for the next person."

Jessica scoots closer and rests her forearms on the table, readjusting back into the interview. She tells me about her friend Koko who was recently forced to throw away all of the bags she carried because of a maggot infestation. Koko, one of the women Jessica spends her days with, has been in and out of shelters for over ten years. Jessica says Koko's situation is different, referring to her mental illness. But of the other women in the shelter, Jessica explains, "some people say they been homeless for two and three years. And I'm like what? I'm not trying to stay out here for another two, three years."

She tells me that one of the WES shelter staff told her she should stay homeless. "I looked at her and I was like, really? Stay homeless and [the eviction] will go off my credit after seven years? That's four more years. You think I'm gonna stay homeless for that amount of time just to get it off my credit? That's not something you should try to convince someone to do. That's something wrong with the system when that's the advice they give you."

I ask Jessica about her daughter back in New York City.

"I don't know what Michelle doing for work now. But she got one baby at home and the rest is in school. She might as well be a single mom because her husband ain't shit," she says in annoyance.

"When I left, [Michelle] wanted me to come back. I want to go back because I want to see my grandkids. I miss them so much. And then to deal with these grown

people's mess in this shelter? It gets me very aggravated and frustrated. I want to strangle somebody," she says with a hint of humor in her voice. "[Michelle] want me to come back [to New York City]. You don't miss something until it's gone. So when it's there, you should appreciate it. She didn't appreciate me when I was there doing all this for her, taking care of her kids while she running the streets hanging out."

"If you go back do you worry it will happen again," I probe.

"Yeah," Jessica replies definitively. "[Michelle] just needs somebody to help be there to clean her house and cook her food. I was the live-in maid. But I love her because she my child. She my only child." Jessica crosses and uncrosses her legs. "I'm tired of doing what people want me to do and not what I want to do. I been like that for as far as I can remember- not doing what best for me but what's best for everybody else and what they like. I am tired. I am closer to 50 than I am 30. So, I just go with the flow at this point."

I remember Jessica telling me about wanting to take time for herself at the shelter recently. I ask her if she called any hotels.

"I want to get out of the shelter for a week and stay at a hotel just to get a break. But I called the hotel I stayed at before and they want \$480 for 7 days. Then, I called Motel 6 and they want \$55.95 a night for one person. So that's almost \$400. I don't know what I'm going to do, but I need to get out. It's my first year in Colorado and I have heard so much about the Taste of Colorado. I want to go."

"What's that," I ask.



“It’s a bunch of different bands in Civic Center Park. There’s this group called En Vogue. It’s a couple of black girls. They gonna be there Friday at 7:30, but we’ll be in the shelter already. We missing entertainment. It’s bad enough we gotta wait in line to get in and then as far as we can go is to the front of the door, smoke a cigarette, and come back in. I just wanna hear live music (Figure 5.5).”



*Figure 5.5: Jessica was not able to rent a hotel room, but she watched performances at the Taste of Colorado during the day with her friends.*

As Jessica continues her story, it becomes apparent that the longer she is at the shelter, the more frustrated she becomes with public attitudes towards homelessness. She slaps her hand on the table and asks me, "when [the shelter staff] go home, do you think they sit there and wonder how the womens is doing?" Her question hits me hard.

Jessica’s tone sours in distaste as she continues, “they cook hot meals, take a hot shower whenever they feel like it. They get in they bed. They watch t.v. We don’t have

the opportunity to do none of that. That's why some of them need to take a week, a month, and walk in our shoes to see how it really is. This is a messed-up life that people just take and sweep up under a rug because they not in that situation. Some people just don't care. It's not their life. It's not their problem."

I ask Jessica if she still speaks to the man she moved to Denver to be with. She adamantly shakes her head no. "You know, me and him be going through it so much. We stopped talking after we had a texting argument." She laughs at herself as she continues to explain. "Father's Day was the last time I talked to him. He said hurtful things, and when you say hurtful things to me I say more hurtful things back. I don't have time for games. He 30-something-years-old with ten kids, and I'm almost 50-years-old. So I don't be bothering with him."

Changing the subject, Jessica says more somberly, "I hope I find something soon. I don't want to be out here in the cold. I be alright if I can find somebody who will look over the eviction. I thought about renting a hotel room with a kitchenette, but they want so much. I went to one in the ghetto. It was a dump and they want \$1,200 a month," Jessica sighs, with irritation in her voice. "Sometimes, I be ready to give up and say, fuck it. I'm tired."

### **Last Encounter**

Four months later, in November 2014, Jessica secured transitional housing. The shelter closed down the weekend of my grandfather's funeral in December. I let a few of the shelter staff know that I would not be in to work the final weekend before closing down. I was not able to tell many of the women goodbye, so I asked one of the staff

members to convey it for me. Jessica already moved to transitional housing in November, so I assumed she heard about my grandfather's passing from Veronica or Carmen. But her phone call in December still caught me off guard.

The phone call lasted less than 3 minutes. The women were always talking about how they were short on pay-as-you-go plan phone minutes, and I did not want to take up more time than she could afford to lose. I thanked her for calling and asked her how her apartment was. She joked, "I can take a bath whenever I want and go outside for a cigarette break whenever and however long I want. It's amazing." I could not help but laugh with her, remembering her constant complaints to the shelter manager on the brevity of the allowed time for smoke breaks. Her laughter died down as she told me, "keep your head up, Taylor. You'll miss him, but you are strong."

When I began work on the exhibit in January 2015, the phone number I had for Jessica was out of service. I worked with Veronica to try to get in touch with Jessica, but we did not have any luck reaching her. Because of Jessica's enthusiasm with her photographs during the summer of 2014, I felt confident in including her photographs in the exhibit. She already selected what photos she wanted displayed, though. I did not have the opportunity to allow her to write her own captions for her pictures like the other exhibit participants. In consultation with the DUMA staff, we decided to display her photographs with an excerpt from her interview (Figure 5.6).





*Figure 5.6: Jessica's photography display in the Can You See Me? Exhibit at the DU Museum of Anthropology.*

## CHAPTER SIX: VERONICA

“I would say I have had a good life. I made mistakes. I'm human. I am a caring, compassionate person that just wants a new beginning. More good steps in the right direction. I just want to be better than I was before. I just want my life to be good but I also want everyone else's to be good too. I try to be very upfront and truthful with people. If you fall down, I'll pick you back up. But you gotta prove to me it's what you want so I don't waste my time. There are people out there that you just can't fix. No way at all possible. But I like to think that I'm a fixer.”



*Figure 6.1: Portrait of Veronica.*

### **First Encounter**

From the moment I met Veronica, I found it easy to fall in to casual conversation with her because of her warmth. She was one of the first women I befriended while volunteering at WES. I was on duty handing out one fitted sheet, one flat sheet, and one blanket to each woman as they came in for the night. I enjoyed this job because I got to know the women more through their blanket preferences. Some shelter staff tried to accommodate the women's bedding preferences out of an understanding that they get to choose very little for themselves while staying in the shelter.

When Veronica came up in the bedding line, she asked for a thick purple comforter near the bottom of the stack. Veronica's eyes were glassy and her leathery face was a brighter red than usual. I could tell something was bothering her, so I made the effort to dig up the purple comforter she wanted. Her smile did not quite reach her eyes as she took the bedding and told me I was a sweetheart.

The next night while she was waiting in line to go out for a smoke break, Veronica leaned in to the office doorway and told me thank you for the comforter again. Veronica told me she lost her credit card, reported it stolen, then later found it, so she doesn't have any money for 7 days until the new card arrived in the mail at her mom's house and she could go pick it up. In the meantime, she borrowed \$5 from Debbie, another resident. She split it with Gina and bought some cigarettes. She said, "you know, we take care of each other like that."

From that night forward, Veronica and I talked every night that I was working and she made it in on the lottery list. It was through these casual conversations that I told

Veronica about my project, and she eagerly agreed to be a part of the photovoice project. She told me she missed having something creative to do. Years ago, Veronica used to have a flower garden that she would tend to with her children when they were very little. She told me during the photovoice project that being able to take pictures brought her the same kind of happiness she used to feel when she would tend to her flowers (Figure 6.2).



*Figure 6.2: "I had my garden every year for so many years. And now that I can't, I fidget a lot. Gardening was a big outlet for me. So, I just love looking at the flowers. I miss it so much. I had to have pictures of these flowers so I can write about this journey I've been on these past 4 months."*

### **Interview**

Veronica asked if we could meet to do her interview at the McDonald's on corner of 16th Street Mall and Broadway. She finishes her cigarette as I walk up, hugging me tightly with a giant smile planted on her wrinkled face. I hold the door open for her, as we

escape the morning chill. I offer to buy Veronica breakfast, but she refuses and insists on paying for her own coffee. Veronica asks me about my week, as we made our way to a booth in the corner by the window.

Smiling to herself, she softly whispers, "I got a job."

My head whips up in surprise from where I was fumbling with the audio recorder, meeting her gaze. "What? That's awesome!"

She tells me she is going to be working in a call center downtown. She is surprised she got the job. "I had to pull all this stuff with me to a job interview. Would you hire a person with all their shit toting behind them? I wouldn't!"

"I can't imagine how difficult that must be," I reply.

"There are a lot of us homeless people that have proven a lot of these people wrong too though. Just because we are homeless doesn't mean we won't make it. Because we will. If we are going to have the drive to go out to get a job, then we are going to have even more drive to try to keep that job. We are more dedicated workers because we don't want to be this way," she explains in her sharp, pointed voice.

Letting loose a bronchial cough from years of smoking and a constant battle with bronchitis, Veronica rasps, "let's get this started, why don't we?"

Veronica tells me about her childhood growing up as a self-proclaimed "military brat." Her father was a munitions expert in the United States Air Force, so her family lived all over the world. She was born in Japan. By the time she was nine-years-old, Veronica lived in multiple bases throughout Japan, Germany, and France with her parents and her six siblings. When she was ten years old, her family relocated to Colorado

Springs, Colorado. Three years later, her father got a job at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal working on chemical weapons, so the family moved to Denver. When the Rocky Mountain Arsenal closed down a year later, things got really tough for her family. Veronica had a close relationship with her father, even during the hard times.

"I was a daddy's girl like nobody's business. Everywhere he went, I wanted to be. I learned how to fish when I was three. I learned how to shoot a gun when I was nine. My dad was everything. He was the one that took me to the doctors, not my mom. We used to take trips back and forth to Colorado Springs together, just me and my dad, just to get out and get away."

When Veronica was sixteen, the congenital heart defect that she shared with her father ended his life. "That was pretty traumatic for me. I loved my dad. I still haven't really completely accepted him being gone, you know. When my dad died, I lost a part of myself."

While participating in the photovoice project, Veronica's memories of her father shone through (Figure 6.3, Figure 6.4). Veronica explained how her life changed following her father's death. "After he died, I went downhill. I started doing things I wasn't supposed to do. I think kids do that because they're so shocked and depressed that it takes you to a place you wouldn't normally go, you know. I started skipping school. I made good grades, so it wasn't like I blew everything. It was just that there was a solid part of my life gone, and I was trying to find myself again."

Veronica dropped out of school. It was during this time that a friend's older sister introduced her to marijuana. "I started doing drugs and drinking. The drugs weren't really

that bad because all I was doing was smoking pot. But you know, it was a bad thing to do. I didn't smoke pot all the time. It wasn't until I met my first husband... He did drugs, chemical drugs. He introduced me to cocaine."



*Figure 6.3: "I love those old lamps in the background. They remind me of London and watching those old Bela Lugosi movies with the fog with my dad. While we would watch movies, he would sit there and twirl my hair while we sat there and laughed. We were just that close."*

At nineteen, Veronica began dating Glen. A year into their relationship, she got pregnant. As Veronica described their relationship, she told me how he became increasingly violent towards her. When she told Glen she was pregnant, he insisted they get married. Veronica was adamantly against this idea, but Glen convinced her that getting married would mean their baby would have insurance and would be provided for if something happened to him.



Veronica describes Glen as a functioning drug addict. She says at night he would get "all kinds of messed up" but would still be able to wake up and go to a job the next day. He worked a cabinet-maker, and he re-did the cabinets in her mother's and sisters'



*Figure 6.4: "I just love to sit and watch squirrels. I could sit and watch them all day. Squirrels make me feel good and laugh. They remind me of times with my dad. That's one thing I do love about being homeless. I can just be there in the outdoors with them. I was so lucky to have my camera to catch him with it in his mouth."*

homes. It was kind acts like this that reassured any of Veronica's hesitancy about being with him. At the time, Veronica believed he was becoming a better man because he stopped beating her and became very doting.

When she was eight and a half months pregnant with their daughter, Veronica caught Glen cheating on her. She confronted him at one of their favorite biker bar hangouts and beat him with a pool stick until the bartender could pull her off of him. She



kicked him out, but "the next morning he came by, and I told him he needed to pack his shit and leave. I was young and naïve, so he did his silver tongue thing and convinced me to let him stay."

Shortly after their daughter Miranda was born, Veronica tried cocaine for the first time. "We were still together. It just got worse. The beating got worse. The running around got worse. And the drugs got worse. I thought if I tried [cocaine] one time he would see how bad it was and would stop."

When I ask Veronica what happened after that, she explains, "It didn't happen the way I thought it would. I was hooked. I didn't do it very often because I was breastfeeding. I had already cut down to cigarettes but I couldn't give them up. I just couldn't. So I had two or three a day, but I wasn't getting stoned so that was good."

A year later, Veronica was pregnant again. She and Glen were still together, but the abuse and the drug use had worsened. "He almost didn't get to meet his son. I was almost 5 months pregnant and he bent me over a table backwards and started punching me. He threw me into labor. I called the cops and he left. The cops took me to the hospital. I was actually the first woman in Colorado to try this trial medicine for stopping contractions if you go into labor too early. I was on it up until two weeks before I delivered. I had to watch my stress levels to not go into labor."

Veronica takes a break from telling her story to go to the restroom. I write down some of my thoughts about what she has said so far. When she returns, I ask her, "what happened next?"

"I was still in love with the guy," she says, shaking her head. "I had his daughter and was pregnant. We didn't know if it was a boy or a girl. When I found out that it was a boy, I thought to myself, 'Oh my gosh he's always wanted a boy so maybe he'll change.' So I called him and told him that he had a son and told him to do me a favor and not come to the hospital. He called me back begging me to let him see his son. Two days later, he showed up to pick me up from the hospital. He promised me things were going to be better. He promised he would change because he finally had a son. I believed him and let him come back."

Four and a half months later, Glen was stabbed to death at a party in a drug-related fight. Veronica was widowed at 23 with a two-year-old daughter and a four-month-old son. Veronica lost the house she and Glen lived in, so she and her two children moved into a small one-bedroom apartment. Veronica was grateful that both her sister and mother worked at Southwestern Bell with her so she could have a constant support network. They were both on shift when Veronica received the call that Glen had passed away.

Six months after Glen's death, Veronica met her second husband. At this point, Veronica had stopped using cocaine, and insisted she only smoked marijuana occasionally at night to take the edge off. Mike was a family-oriented man who was willing and happy to step into a father role to Veronica's two children. Veronica and Mike were together for twelve and a half years, and her children came to view him as their father.

I ask Veronica why they separated after nearly 13 years, and she sits folding and unfolding her arms for a minute before she explains. At that point in her life, she had started to do cocaine again. It had gotten to a point where she knew she needed to start to get a hold of the addiction. But, it went on for a while until she found out that Mike was doing cocaine as well and was also shooting up. She insisted they split, putting her children's interest before their relationship. She knew snorting cocaine was bad, but she did not want Mike shooting up and being around the children. After they split, Veronica sent her children to live with her brother while she went into a rehabilitation program for her drug use.

Veronica went to the rehab program with high hopes of repairing the strain she put on her family and to redirect the life she was laying out for her children. She spoke of the split from her children, "We had sat there and cried for like three days before they went with my brother. But I had explained to them how important it was that mommy got better first." However, things did not go according to her plan.

"While I'm at rehab, my brother and Mike are sitting there telling the kids that my drugs and my booze meant more to me than they did. But they had my phone so I couldn't call them. I had to concentrate on me getting better. I stayed for a little over a year because when six months came up, I wasn't ready to leave. I was afraid, so I stayed another six months and then I was ready to come home. Well when I came home, I had a very rude awakening. The kids didn't want to come with me. They hated me. My brother and Mike did a great job turning them against me."

Veronica felt like the work she had done in her rehabilitation program was for nothing. She spent the next six years on and off drugs while trying to repair her strained relationship with her children. When they both were hooked on drugs, Veronica decided she had to stop to help them quit. But it was not so easy.

"They were on meth. Meth is worse than cocaine, but both of them are bad. I had to quit, so I quit. But I didn't quit drinking. Drinking wasn't really a problem until the kids were older. They would beg me to stop and then when they got old enough, they were worse than me. I would have to go over and watch my daughter's little girls because she was too busy hugging the toilet. We were really going through it together. The drugs were hard, the booze was hard, we just needed to do it together. We got through all of that and everything was great."

Life went well for Veronica for several years after she helped her children quit meth. She was even able to get her GED through a Red Rocks Community College program. However, Veronica's life was upended once again when her daughter accused her of drunk driving with her granddaughters in the car three and a half years ago.

While telling me this part of her life-history, Veronica insisted she never drank around the girls after the life she had while she was raising her own children. In an angered response, Veronica ended up drinking and driving and was arrested with a DUI. Veronica's daughter has prohibited her from seeing her grandchildren since, which is still very raw subject for her.

She describes the conflict with her daughter filled with emotion, "My daughter started telling me that I abandoned them. There's so many different forms of

abandonment that I looked up, so I could where she think I did. But I never abandoned her. They always had my phone number. They always knew where I was. They always knew where I lived.” Veronica emphasizes her words with a hand beating down on the table every time she said the word always. “I mean, I never gave up on my kids. They always knew where I was and could call me any time. So I mean, it was like ‘why are you doing this to me?’” Veronica looks up at me with tears in her eyes.

I ask Veronica if she has talked to her daughter since becoming homeless. She shakes her head to say “no,” and throws her hands up in the air. “So, I’m just sitting here waiting for the day that my daughter realizes that I did what I did for them because I loved them.”

After the conflict with her daughter two and a half years ago, Veronica moved in with her older sisters in Littleton to be a caretaker and help them with errands. The arrangement was tenuous at best, and Veronica found herself back in her old habits. “One night, four and a half months ago, I got really drunk. I went to Denver for a few days and when I came back three days later my sisters had changed the locks on me. I was so mad. My sister called the cops on me, so I left. I’ve been homeless ever since.”

I ask Veronica what her first night homeless was like.

“I was bawling my head off. I didn’t know downtown Denver, despite living here for so long. So I had to ride the bus down there and then I had to find the shelter. I was walking with this guy that I knew from way back. He was on probation down here somewhere. He helped me find Elati. From there, Elati has been my home. I don’t like going anywhere else.”

When I ask her to explain, she says, "I don't like The Aristocrat. I don't like Samaritan. They have too many rules and they're not as helpful as they say they are. I love Elati."

She further elaborates on why she loves WES, "Marsha has bent over backwards for me a few times. So has Rebecca, Gwen, and you. Once I started going there, it became my home. I didn't want to go anywhere else. I felt safe there. I had to revert to my old biker days and be all bitchy and mean. I don't like it, but I need it right now. I am dealing. Elati has been really good for me. Even when I didn't make it in on the lottery, I still made it in somehow so the staff have been good to me. The staff is caring and giving and compassionate and they listen. I mean, Gwen and Rebecca know me the best and they know how to handle me when I get upset. They really pay attention to who we are. They try really hard to get to know all of us. They know me and they know how to take care of me. They need to come to the new shelter. I need them. We all need them. And I told the guy from Samaritan [who is opening the new shelter] that.

Denver's Road Home reallocated the funding from Volunteers of America, who operated WES, to Catholic Charities. We had to announce to the women in November that the shelter was closing down in December. Understandably, the women were upset by the news. Veronica was among one of the most vocal about her concerns.

"None of us are happy about them shutting the shelter down and opening the new one at all. You know, I start work tomorrow. It's just phone surveys right now, but it's a job. Elati is very centralized for a lot of us. We can come in late, and it's not a problem here. But that shelter all the way out there? They're going to be busing us, and it's going

to be really hard. It's like they aren't seeing the whole picture. Everything is bad. I don't know what the city is thinking. It's going to be a mess."

I ask Veronica what the hardest part about being homeless has been for her. She very quickly replies, "being a recovering addict. You are one for the rest of your life. I still meet my demons at night when I go to sleep. I meet my demons during the day when I see people all gagged out. It just gives you that feeling, it's hard to describe. Anxious is a good word. It makes me very anxious. There's always some kind of drug or alcohol trigger that makes me anxious." She tells me about driving her mom on errands through the city and how passing her old dealer's house makes her remember tough times. In one of the photographs Veronica took, she told me about how it reminded her of Glen. While she did not explain more about her biker days, Veronica did occasionally mention the old biker bar where she and Glen got into a bar fight when she was pregnant (Figure 5).

You know, I just can't lie about it because if I do then I'm not being true to myself and I can't ever get better. So I have to keep reminding myself, why do you want to go there? Why did you go there in the first place? And that's a question I will never be able to answer. What was the attraction to drugs? I don't know. Who knows? It is what it is. I still think about my dad all the time. I think about how upset he would be if he knew what's happened to me in my life. But I think if my dad was still alive, things would have been a lot different. I try to be positive." Despite everything, Veronica tells me she looks for hope in the small things (Figure 6.5).

Speaking about what brings her hope, Veronica tells me about her pursuit for higher education. Completing her GED rekindled Veronica's joy for school work. After

completing the GED program at Red Rocks Community College, Veronica took several basic courses to prepare her for entry into a college program.

“When did you start classes?”



*Figure 6.5: After several attempts to capture a Colorado sunrise on her first two disposable cameras, Veronica was happy with her final attempt. “This is my awesome, awesome sunrise. It makes me hopeful.”*

I just started my sociology degree this year. I started in August. I took the summer off this summer because of what was going on and everything. I didn't think I would be able to handle it. And even when I went back to school in August, it's been rough because of all this (Figure 6.6). I missed five classes. But as far as I know, the last time I check I had an 88% in the class and my GPA is 3.75. I even surprised myself,” Veronica’s face brightens as she speaks of her schooling. “I am really glad. This August was my first real college class. So it's been very exciting!”





*Figure 6.6: "I like to do my homework out at the pavilions. The noise doesn't really bother me."*

I tell Veronica I am proud of her for her dedication to her degree in the face of the challenges she is dealing with. She smiles at me, reaching her arm across the table to grasp my hand in thanks.

When we finish the life history interview, I talk to Veronica about Jessica since she moved into transitional housing. Veronica explains that the newness of having her own place had worn off for Jessica. She's feeling very isolated and lonely. Veronica says it is hard for her to keep in touch with her because Jessica hates the cold and she never goes out in the winter. Veronica insists she is also happy for her that she doesn't have to get out in the cold if she doesn't have to. That luxury means a lot to Veronica, but she seemed upset that Jessica didn't see more value in that luxury.

I have to go to class, so we part ways. Veronica stands up and hugs me tightly. As we pull apart, she smiles deeply and looking warmly into my eyes. She says, "thank you for this. It's been therapeutic for me."

### **Final Encounter**

By the time work began on the photography exhibit in January, WES was closed down. The phone number I had for Veronica no longer worked, so I had no way of contacting her about the exhibit. I reached out to the staff at the new shelter, where I found some familiar faces. Marsha was working with the new shelter's staff in the transition, and she invited me to help one night as a way to see Veronica.

When I saw Veronica again, the first thing I noticed was that she dyed her hair darker copper red color. She hugged me when she saw me. She told me she made a B+ in her sociology class, thanks to her final presentation. I asked what she presented, and she said her experience at the shelter using the photos she took in the photovoice project. While we caught up, I explained to her that we were underway with building the exhibit for their photographs. I told Veronica that I had not been able to reach Jessica, and she said they had also fallen out of contact in the past few months since our interview. Before I left, Veronica gave me her updated phone number so I could contact her when the exhibit was opening.

I went back to the new shelter to give Veronica printed instructions for her friends and family to get to the DUMA gallery to see the exhibit. Veronica told me she was anxious about the exhibit opening in the days before. I was not surprised when I went back up to the shelter to give her the directions, that she told me she did not want to come

to the opening night. I offered to open the exhibit hall to her on a weekend so she could spend as much time in privacy looking through the space, she pulled me into a hug so quickly I did not even realize what was happening at first. We agreed that I would pick her up from the day shelter and take her to DUMA to see the exhibit the following Saturday.

As we drove to DUMA the following Saturday, I was nervous for Veronica to see the exhibit. I worried that she would be disappointed somehow. She chatted the entire way to campus, telling me how much she did not like the new shelter and how much she missed WES.

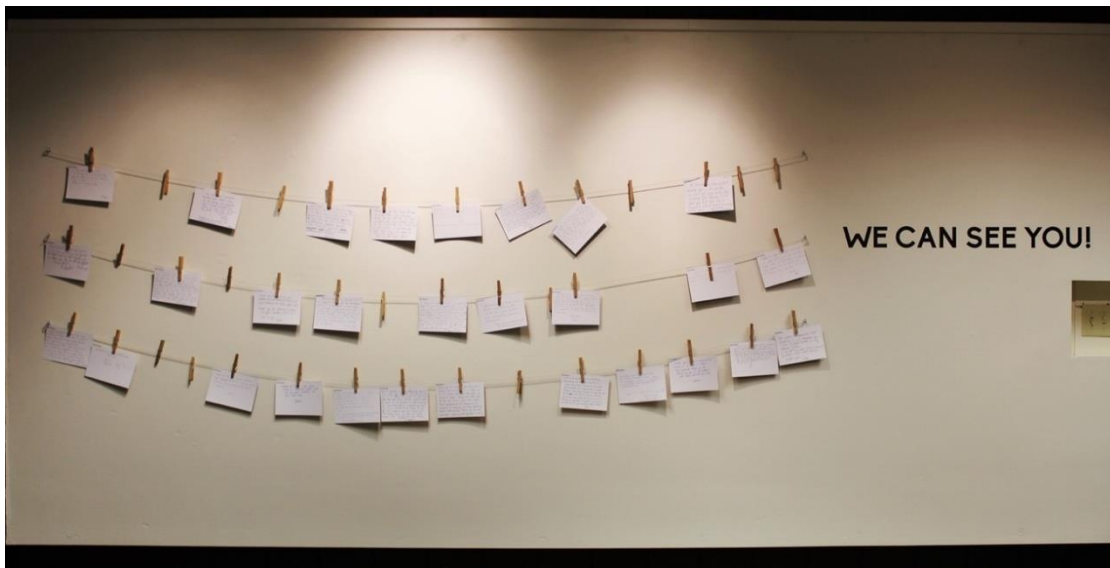
Veronica spoke very little while she walked through the exhibit hall. She held my hand throughout, touching the photographs she wrote and the captions she took (Figure 6.7). She looked at the pictures Jessica and Carmen took with close focus, smiling and



*Figure 6.7: Veronica's photographs on display in the Can You See Me? Exhibit.*

laughing to herself as she remembered being with them while they took many of the photographs on display. When she had looked through all of their pictures, I walked her over to the final part of the exhibit.

On the far wall, we created an answer, “We Can See You” to the question title of the exhibit, “Can You See Me?”. In this section of the exhibit, visitors had the opportunity to engage with the women by writing postcards to them after seeing their photos on display (Figure 6.8). When Veronica got to this part of the exhibit, tears silently ran down her face. She read through each visitor’s postcard, regardless of which woman it was addressed to. I stepped back and stood in the doorway to allow her alone time while she read through the comments. When she was finished an hour later, she walked up to me and gave me a warm hug and simply said, “thank you.”



*Figure 6.8: The “We Can See You” visitor engagement portion of the Can You See Me? Exhibit.*

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

In the following chapter, I analyze Jessica and Veronica's lived experiences with the social exclusions that accompany homelessness. In particular, I have divided this chapter into two main findings—internalizations of social exclusion and resistance against social exclusion—with related subthemes for each.

The first main theme, internalizations of social exclusion, assesses the technologies of the self the women employ in attempting to re-assimilate into “mainstream society.” Subthemes include pathologizing addiction, embracing homeless identity, affirming otherization, and hoping for identity transformation. The second theme I discuss is resistance against social exclusion, entailing a discussion of how the women resist their marginalization. Objecting to infantilization, coping through distancing, and asserting “pre-homeless self” are the subthemes for this section. Throughout the presentation of themes and subthemes, I incorporate direct quotes from the two previous results chapters with a discussion of how these findings and analyses are in conversation with the literature I reviewed in Chapter Three: Literature Review. Finally, I briefly summarize the findings analyzed in this chapter.

### **Internalizations of Social Exclusion**

Especially for Veronica, the judgment of her addict identity as “bad” leads to an internalization of her social exclusion in which she vocalizes her attempts to re-assimilate

herself. Even Veronica's efforts at education can be seen as a way to correct her pathologized identity. She shows deference to the staff, embraces the "homeless identity" often saying "we," etc. In Jessica's frustration with the public perceptions of homelessness, she internalizes the messed-up part of it. Both Veronica and Jessica acknowledge their social exclusion in their hope for identity transformation once they are no longer homeless.

### Pathologizing Addiction

After [my dad] died, I went downhill. I started doing things I wasn't supposed to do. I think kids do that because they're so shocked and depressed that it takes you to a place you wouldn't normally go, you know? I started skipping school. I made good grades, so it wasn't like I completely blew everything. It was just that there was this solid part of my life gone, and I was trying to find myself again. —

Veronica

I started doing drugs and drinking. The drugs weren't really that bad because all I was doing was smoking pot. But you know, it was a bad thing to do. I didn't smoke pot all the time. —Veronica

I had two or three [cigarettes] a day, but I wasn't getting stoned so that was good.

—Veronica

They were on meth. Meth is worse than cocaine, but both of them are bad. —

Veronica

In Chapter Two: Background, I discussed the pathologization of homelessness whereby the absence of shelter has been constructed as a social illness that must be assessed for treatment based on judgments made by service providers. The process through which Veronica places a moral distinction of her experiences with drug use can be evaluated as a technology of the self. In the excerpts above, Veronica tells a story of a young girl in mourning who, in a weak moment of grief, turned to drugs. She asserts that this was not something she would have normally done. She first emphasizes that the drugs were “not that bad” because it was marijuana but insists she knew it was wrong. When discussing her drug use while pregnant in the second quote, Veronica distinguishes her cigarettes from marijuana use. The third example shows Veronica positioning her drug abuse as not as problematic as the meth that her children used.

You are [a recovering addict] for the rest of your life. I still meet my demons at night when I go to sleep. I meet my demons during the day when I see people all gagged out. It just gives you that feeling. It’s hard to describe. Anxious is a good word. It makes me very anxious. There’s always some kind of drug or alcohol trigger that makes me anxious. –Veronica

You know, I can’t lie about it because if I do then I’m not being true to myself and I can’t get better. So, I have to keep reminding myself, why do you want to go there? –Veronica

In these two excerpts, Veronica describes her consistent struggle with her addiction and the technologies of the self that she partakes in to resist temptation. Veronica self-identifies as a recovering addict. In doing so, she has placed herself within

the pathologized good:bad and deserving:undeserving dichotomy of deservedness from which social workers assess her ability to undergo rehabilitation (Arnold 2004). Veronica admonishes her drug use perhaps to show she acknowledges how those “deviant” behaviors do not conform to the societal norms. In line with Veronica’s self-policing, Williams discusses the role of the shelter and its staff in “fixing’ the homeless through surveillance and control of ‘deviant lifestyles” (1996, 110).

It is important to acknowledge my role as a shelter volunteer when analyzing Veronica’s presentation of self. As a shelter volunteer, I worked in precisely the same role as paid case managers. I was scheduled like employees, and I was held accountable for committing to a shift. Largely, this was a result of severe understaffing. As a result of my role, many of the residents at the shelter were unclear on whether or not I was a paid staff person despite my repeated insistence that I was not. I believe that my role as a representative of the shelter convoluted the power dynamics of this discussion with Veronica. At times, it seems that she felt the need to assert her acknowledgment of her past behaviors (drug use) as “bad” to show that her “pathologies” of homelessness have been identified and are being treated. It is possible to interpret from her narrative that she is working to “assimilate into the welfare system,” to move from “bad” to “good,” from “other” to “citizen” (Arnold 2004).

### Embracing Homeless Identity

We look out for each other like that. –Veronica

At the beginning of Veronica’s chapter, I introduced how we met. She was upset because her debit card was stolen, but her spirits were lifted when she was gifted \$5.



Instead of keeping the money for herself, Veronica bought cigarettes and shared them with another homeless woman. Gift-giving and reciprocity can be effective methods through which social ties are formed on the streets (Bourgois 200). In her study, Partis (2003) found that one way homeless people sustain a sense of hope is from feeling connected through friendships with other homeless people.

There are a lot of us homeless people that have proven a lot of these people wrong too though. Just because we are homeless doesn't mean we won't make it. Because we will. If we are going to have the drive to go out and get a job, then we are going to have even more drive to keep that job. We are more dedicated workers because we don't want to be this way. –Veronica

She expressed frustration in having to carry all of her belongings to a job interview, saying she would never hire someone like herself. However, she followed with the excerpt above in which she can be seen to be defending the job-hunting and working homeless. In Snow and Anderson's work with homeless men in Austin, the authors present associational embracement of the homeless identity as protective behaviors of and looking out for other homeless individuals (1987, 1356). In both instances excerpted above, Veronica's behavior can be interpreted as the associational embracement identified by these authors.

We was at the marathon on Sunday. We was there. We was hungry. I mean hungry. We didn't eat all day. And Veronica walked over to one of the trucks and explained to the man that she had 5 homeless friends sitting in the park that hadn't ate. –Jessica

Jessica describes an incident where Veronica approached a food truck worker in Civic Center Park for free food. The embracement seen here is twofold: (1) Jessica uses “we” when referring to herself as a group of homeless, and (2) Veronica leverages her homeless identity for resources. In the first instance, Jessica can be seen as partaking in the same kind of associational embracement exhibited by Veronica in the previous two excerpts. Snow and Anderson describe role embracement as an avowal of learned adaptations for survival on the streets. The second embracement embedded within the excerpt above can be explained as Veronica taking on the homeless identity and utilizing it for the purpose of acquiring a basic need. Unlike the findings analyzed in this section, DeWard and Moe (2010) described embracing the total institution of the shelter as a total submission to the power dynamics at play. DeWard and Moe’s interpretation of shelter power dynamics is more closely reflecting in the next subtheme.

#### Affirming Dependency

Elati has been really good for me. Even when I didn’t make it in on the lottery, I still made it in somehow. So, the staff have been good to me. The staff is caring and giving and compassionate and they listen. I mean, Gwen and Rebecca know me the best and they know how to handle me when I get upset. They really pay attention to who we are. They try really hard to get to know all of us. They know me and they know how to take care of me. They need to come to the new shelter. I need them. –Veronica

In the quote above, Veronica discusses the role of the shelter and the staff in her experiences with homelessness. She values the staff’s care, particularly in how they can

manage her when she is difficult. There are multiple interpretations of Veronica's supportive comments about her value of shelter staff's role in her life. It is possible to view these sentiments as an internalization of her pathologic homelessness that needs correcting. In evaluating the prevailing stereotypes of homelessness that purport individual ineptitude as the leading cause, Veronica could be acknowledging her social rejection. As a result, one could infer that she is partaking in technologies of the self that in attempting to acclimatize and normalize herself, she internalizes the power dynamics and perpetuates the dependency. Alternatively, this excerpt could be seen as Veronica performing a presentation of self, aware of what is expected within the power dynamic. In Sarah DeWard and Angela Moe's discussion of shelter survival strategies, the authors discuss the way shelter residents submit to shelter staff (2010). DeWard and Moe describe the shelters as structured to view homeless as dependents because of an inability to manage their lives. However, DeWard and Moe also note that "such a survival strategy may be illustrative of a strategic use of power by these women, in that by appearing non-confrontational and conformist, they are consciously acting the part required of them to secure a roof over their heads" (2010, 124). While I do believe that some part of Veronica has internalized her dependency upon the shelter, I do not think it is a far leap to infer how she utilizes benevolence as a survival strategy.

Once I started going [to Elati], it became my home. I didn't want to go anywhere else. I felt safe there. –Veronica

This transcript excerpt shows Veronica placing meanings of home on the shelter. It is interesting to note that while Jessica repeatedly vocalizes her critiques the social

service industry, she moves into transitional housing. Jessica does participate in assimilation through constantly filling out applications. However, she does not perform the level of social presentation of self-improvement and dependency to the service providers in which Veronica engages. Veronica appears to embrace and internalize the shelter power dynamics, thus remaining in the shelter system. This may also be because Veronica may be more socially excluded than Jessica because she exhibits a more pathologized version of homelessness because of her addiction and aggression.

#### Hoping for Identity Transformation

I'm trying to get back in school. I got accepted to work on my GED and work on a business course. –Jessica

When I went back to school in August, it's been rough. I missed five classes. But as far as I know, the last time I check I had an 88% in the class and my GPA is 3.75. I even surprised myself. I am really glad. –Veronica

Veronica and Jessica express a desire to achieve educational goals. For Jessica, she hopes to earn her GED, despite several roadblocks she experienced with The Gathering Place's course skipping around, content-wise. In telling me about her work towards a sociology degree, Veronica emphasizes her resilience to succeed despite the barriers to success that being homeless presents. The hope for identity transformation shows a technology of self whereby Veronica and Jessica are actively involved in doing work on themselves to conform to society's norms for the ideal citizen. The idealization of an educated future can be interpreted as perpetuating the myth of the American dream.

The sentiments from both women echo the notion that once you have an education, you are set up for success.

I would say I have had a good life. I made mistakes. I'm human. I am a caring, compassionate person that just wants a new beginning. More good steps in the right direction. I just want to be better than I was before. I just want my life to be good but I also want everyone else's to be good too. –Veronica

When preparing for the photography exhibit, I met Veronica in Civic Center Park. I needed to take a portrait of her and to capture a biography section to feature with the portrait that accompanied her photos in the exhibit. I asked Veronica how she would like to describe herself to visitors to the exhibit. Veronica's response is reflected in the quote above. In Boydell, Goering, Morrell-Bellai's research, the participants "considered the possibility of identity transformation and the notion of a reformulated self that focused on individual capacity and the promotion of health and well-being" (Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai 2000, 34). In doing so, the authors found that the participants indicated a level of "self-acceptance" for their current state that leads to transcending through action. Veronica and Jessica's decision to pursue education can be interpreted similarly, as taking courses is an active form of seeking self-transcendence.

### **Resistance Against Social Exclusion**

In the second theme, I discuss the means through which Jessica and Veronica object to being socially excluded for being homeless. Jessica's story is one of constant confrontation against her experience being labeled homelessness. Jessica reacts against the notion that society excludes her by objecting to infantilization by shelter staff,

distancing herself from other homeless women, and holding on to aspects of her pre-homeless self. Veronica also finds utility in asserting aspects of her pre-homeless identity. Additionally, Veronica uses the photovoice project to create photographs of things that remind her of her pre-homeless self.

### Objecting to Infantilization

I'm not gonna let no one talk to me the way they want to talk to me. I'm gonna speak up. Either you kick me out or... But I am not a child. –Jessica

Multiple times throughout Jessica's chapter, she emphasizes her frustration with the shelter staff treating the clients like children. The infantilization of people experiencing homelessness is prevalent in much of the qualitative work done in homeless shelters (Williams 1996) (Partis 2003) (Hoffman and Coffey 2008) (DeWard and Moe 2010). Hoffman and Coffey define infantilization as "the attitude that providers know better" (2008, 213). Prior research has found that the shelter staff uses subordinate power dynamics like infantilization to elicit desired response from clients (Williams 1996) (Hoffman and Coffey 2008) (DeWard and Moe 2010). Jessica's interaction with Debra telling her to stay homeless for a few more years until her eviction clears her credit history can also be seen as a way the service provider insists they know what is in the best interest of the client. While Partis (2003) found that infantilization led to devalued sense of hope, Jessica seemed to find a sense of self-assertion in objecting to being treated like a child.

Ethel said, ‘you cannot talk to adult people the way y’all talk to them.’ They weren’t paying no mind to what she was saying. They told her to get her stuff and leave. – Jessica

At the same time, Jessica’s story about Ethel getting kicked out for talking back to the staff illustrates the limits of client resistance to shelter staff power dynamics. Like the literature shows, Jessica’s story illustrates the disciplinary structures embedded in the shelter that does not allow for talking back, even when seen as an attempt to identify one’s personhood (Williams 1996) (DeWard and Moe 2010). Scholars have shown that this practice contributes to the pathologizing of homelessness in that shelter staff are managing cases to provide a treatment plan to “correct and control the homeless person” (Williams 1996).

The practice of infantilization can be seen as one way to make sense of the structural flaws of the social service industry. Treating adults in a way that asserts that the provider knows best perpetuates stereotypic welfare dependency discourse. It follows that infantilization as a disciplinary mechanism of control can lead subjected individuals to internalize their dependent, “less-than” nature ultimately to the demise of their attempts to become housed (Williams 1996) (Hoffman and Coffey 2008). Particularly at emergency shelters like WES, underfunding, staff burnout, bureaucratic policies can explain why shelter staff resort to mechanisms of control that are located in establishing a clear divide that reinforces between provider and dependent.

### Coping through Distancing

Some people say they been homeless for two and three years. And I'm like what?

I'm not trying to stay out here for another two, three years. –Jessica

Jessica talked about her friend Koko whose long-term homelessness she described as different from hers because of Koko's mental illness. In positioning herself differently from Koko, Jessica used a hierarchical view of her relationship to other homeless women as a dialectic tool to preserve her identity as different from the stereotypical homeless. Relationally positioning of oneself as in some way better than others experiencing homelessness is a recurring theme in identity research among people experiencing homelessness (Snow and Anderson 1987, 1348-1353) (Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai 2000, 32-33) (DeWard and Moe 2010). This hierarchical coping occurs from leveraging an aspect of their identity that affords them the ability to identify with mainstream cultural norms rather than with homeless stereotypes. In being aware of preconceived notions of homelessness tied to mental illness, it is possible to see how Jessica shifts the focus to how she is different from the "other" homeless people. This presentation of self as different from other homeless allows Jessica to maintain, reinforce, and operationalize the distinction for herself.

I do wanna open up a business that's a building that helps the homeless. I been wanting to do this for a couple years, I just been putting it off and putting it off. – Jessica

Aspects of the hierarchical coping mechanism can also be seen in Jessica's plans to help homeless women. In asserting this future goal, Jessica can be interpreted as



rejecting the notion that she is like other homeless women in her desire to help “the homeless” (Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai 2000). Additionally, it is possible to infer that both Veronica and Jessica actively work to negotiate a distinction from others through their pursuits for education, as already presented in the Hoping for Identity Transformation subtheme.

Veronica and Jessica partake in technologies of the self in distancing themselves from other people experiencing homelessness. By identifying distinctions among homeless, they perpetuate the stereotypes of homelessness while rejecting the same notions for themselves as a form of self-preservation within the confines of life in public space. However, it is not possible to infer the degree to which this is an intentional or self-aware behavior from the results of this study. Others have echoed similar analyses in their work with persons experiencing homelessness (Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai 2000) (Williams 2003) (DeWard and Moe 2010).

Another way both Veronica and Jessica distanced themselves from stereotypes of homelessness was through their participation in the photovoice project and its accompanying exhibit. Photovoice as a research method, interpreted through Goffman’s presentation of the self and Foucault’s technologies of the self, can be a lens into a different kind of understanding of homeless individuals’ conceptualizations of their selves while experiencing homelessness. As a mechanism for self-advocacy, photovoice can also be conceived of as a presentation of self that contests the societal norms that re-frames their experiences of social exclusion. The act of curating an exhibit from

photographs of their experience with social exclusion allowed the women to contest their social exclusion in a social space.

#### Asserting Pre-Homeless Self

You know what I ate for dinner last night? An apple and a bag of chips. I don't eat the bologna sandwiches you hand out. I'm a very picky eater. I only eat bologna if it's fried and if it's beef. I don't eat that pork, chicken, beef mixed together. Nasty. –Jessica

As previously mentioned, one of my primary duties as a volunteer at the shelter was to hand out dinner to the women. Out of this continued interaction regarding food, I noticed that Jessica repeatedly rejected the substantive meal option (usually a sandwich), opting for snack items like crackers, fruit, granola bars, and chips. Early in my fieldwork, I was unclear of what to make out of food rejection when I thought she must be hungry. However, I came to realize that the women had very few opportunities to exercise choice. For many women, choosing what types of food to consume, regardless of how hungry they may be, was something they valued. In the quote above, Jessica can be interpreted as attempting to maintain her “pre-homeless” food preferences within the confines of the shelter dynamics.

I had my garden every year for so many years. And now that I can't, I fidget a lot. Gardening was a big outlet for me. So, I just love looking at the flowers. I miss it so much. I had to have pictures of these flowers, so I can write about this journey I've been on these past 4 months. –Veronica

Several of the photographs presented in Veronica's chapter are of things associated with memories of her dad and her children (see figures 6.2-6.4 in Chapter Six). The quote above comes from the photograph caption to Figure 5.2 of Chapter Five, which is a picture of flowers in Civic Center Park. Veronica's reflects on positive memories attached to her pre-homeless self. One interpretation of these photographs is that Veronica takes pictures of fond memories from her pre-homeless self and utilizes them to resist against the social exclusion that accompanies homelessness. Both Walsh, Rutherford, and Kuzmak (2010) and Bukowski and Buelow (2011) explain how their project participants showed their photographs to friends and others. However, neither share what having the tangible the photographs meant for their project participants.

I used to take care of the elderly. I got my license for that. It expired, then I got sick. But I like helping people, even though it's tough. —Jessica

Jessica's experience with homelessness in Denver occurred several years after her eviction in New York City. She lived with her daughter and cared for her grandchildren before moving to Denver to live with a man she met in a chatroom. While Jessica rarely discussed the scope of her occupation as a home health aide, she did frequently engage me in conversation about my terminally-ill grandfather. Even after entering a transitional housing program, Jessica called to express her condolences about his passing. Checking in on my grandfather's health could be seen as a way for Jessica to remain connected to an aspect of who she was before she felt the social exclusion of homelessness. By retaining and affirming aspects of past self in the way that Jessica does, Jessica can be seen to be grounding herself through the experience of homelessness. Boydell, Goering,

and Morrell-Bellai (2000) similarly found that participants in their study mourned the loss of their past identity.

I had to revert to my old biker days and be all bitchy and mean. I don't like it, but I need it right now. I am dealing. –Veronica

In Veronica's chapter, she shares how she and her first husband, Glen, frequented a biker bar where they got into a bar fight when she was pregnant. In the quote above, Veronica recognizes the utility of whom she was before experiencing homelessness. Whereas Jessica's assertion of her pre-homeless self can be seen through food consumption and identifying ways to connect to her previous career, Veronica's assertion is a strategy for survival. It is interesting to note that Veronica continues to problematize her past self, as I previously discussed in the Pathologizing Addiction and Affirming Otherization sections. One possible reason for this is that she is practicing technologies of the self to show to me, as a representation of the shelter staff, that she is capable of being rehabilitated.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

In this chapter, I discussed two main findings from my results chapters. The first finding was that the two women experiencing homelessness internalized their social exclusion. I presented the ways in which they experienced this internalization, which I interpreted from the women's narratives. These findings included: pathologizing addiction, embracing homeless identity, affirming otherization, and hoping for identity transformation. From the discussion, we can see that many of Jessica and Veronica's practices of internalization are echoed in observations found in other studies. Conversely,

the second finding was that the two women resisted their social exclusion from being considered homeless. Veronica and Jessica resisted through objecting to infantilization, coping through distancing, and asserting their pre-homeless identities.

Throughout the subthemes, I pointed to similarities among the two women. However, there were several key differences between the two women's experiences with homelessness. When analyzing excerpts from their chapters, I found that Veronica's excerpts predominately fell into the internalizing social exclusion category, whereas Jessica's excerpts were predominately examples of resisting social exclusion. For Veronica, being a recovering addict seemed to influence the way she presented herself within the context of the larger homeless narrative. It appeared as though she internalized the good homeless versus bad homeless label to redeem herself in the eyes of the service providers that seemed to Veronica to function as gatekeepers to her desired identity transformation. As a result, Veronica presented herself in such a way that often showed her dependency on the shelter industry to "get better" which could not be done without the shelter institution or the other homeless with which she identified. While Veronica did resist her social exclusion from being homeless when she asserted her pre-homeless identity, it was markedly less apparent in the interview excerpts than Jessica's resistance.

In Jessica's chapter, she repeatedly confronts the social exclusion she encounters. Jessica did occasionally embrace the collective homeless identity as a survival strategy, as illustrated in the incident in the park where she and Veronica sought food from food truck vendors. However, the recurring theme throughout Jessica's chapter is the notion of how tired she is with the social exclusion – both from an institutional and a social level –

that she is experiencing. Through objecting to being treated by shelter staff in a derogatory way and distancing herself from “other” homeless women, I believe that Jessica is able use that frustration and resentment to propel her through the experience. Jessica’s constant feeling of tiredness is evidence of her continued resistance to the exclusion she is experiencing. I believe that resistance is what helped Jessica stay motivated to hound the service providers that kept her running around in circles to access transitional housing.

It is interesting to note that considering Veronica seemed to more predominately internalize her social exclusion from her experiences with homelessness, she is still homeless to this day. Conversely, Jessica more frequently discussed resisting her social exclusion, and she is no longer homeless and in transitional housing. These two different experiences with processing social exclusion can provide useful recommendations for the shelter industry, among other implications, which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 8: Conclusion.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION**

### **Main Findings**

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experience of unaccompanied homeless women seeking shelter at the Women's Emergency Shelter in Denver, Colorado. I used qualitative research methods, including participant-observation and life-history interviews, as well as the participatory research method of photovoice. As a result, I found that the two women who participated in my study both internalized and resisted the social exclusion that accompanied their experience with homelessness. The ways they internalized their social exclusion included Veronica pathologizing her addiction, embracing the stereotypical homeless identity, affirming their dependency on the welfare system, and hoping for an identity transformation after homelessness. While Veronica and Jessica did internalize aspects of their homelessness, their experiences were not without expressions of resistance as well. The ways in which the women resisted their social exclusion included objecting to infantilization and belittling from shelter staff, coping through distancing from other homeless individuals, and asserting and holding on to aspects of their pre-homeless selves.

### **Implications**

These findings confirm what others have previously found in research among homeless outside of Denver. Because this project closely focused on the lived experiences of two individuals, it is difficult to confirm the validity of these findings.

However, as the findings confirm what other researchers have previously identified in other research locations with other homeless populations, I feel confident in asserting my findings. These findings are useful to those who work with the homeless, particularly with women in Denver. I found that staff interactions, be that in day-to-day shelter management or case management of housing applications, had a clear impact on the emotional well-being of the women.

The phenomenological approach of this thesis is a contribution to the existing body of anthropological research about the cultural and social experiences individuals have and how they get embodied. For my thesis, I was specifically interested in the lived experiences of women facing the social exclusion that accompanies homelessness. As a result, I was able to provide richly, descriptive accounts of how that exclusion manifests in the ways the two women present themselves. While phenomenology can be seen as a limited approach because of the narrow focus on few individuals' experiences, I believe that narrow focus allowed me to dig deeper into understanding how stereotypes and misconceptions of homelessness are embodied and resisted in the lives of the project participants.

From these two phenomenological accounts of lived experience with homelessness, this thesis contributes to the discipline of anthropology by continuing the disciplinary response to homelessness in the United States following large-scale economic crises. As discussed in Chapter 2: Background and in Chapter 3: Literature Review, the discipline has historically taken up homelessness as a research topic following economic downturns in U.S. history. As the last major disciplinary focus



occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, my research continues this trend by providing insight into the lived experiences of homelessness following the economic crisis of 2008. As a result of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and in particular Occupy Denver, policymakers have restricted use of public, urban spaces. This thesis sheds light into the impact and the embodiment of contemporary discourses of privatization of public space, the right to the city, and citizenship.

### **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Looking back on the methods and methodology of this research project, I learned several lessons that will inform future research endeavors. While I feel confident that the project participants benefitted from the photovoice project and accompanying exhibit, I learned after concluding my research of methodological approaches to photovoice that could have benefitted the research. The SHOWeD method is useful in order to standardize questions across participants to allow for clearer comparisons and conclusions (Gant et al. 2009). This method involves asking project participants a series of standard questions when reviewing their photographs:

1. What do you **S**ee here?
2. What is really **H**appening here?
3. How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
4. **W**hy does this situation **E**xist?
5. What can we **D**o about it?

In future uses of photovoice in community-based research, I will use this methodological approach to be able to have more participant-based, actionable data.

When I initially proposed this research and collaborated with Denver's Road Home, the intention was for me to identify a place for DRH to locate a bed sign up list where the women spent a majority of their time. I proposed transect walks as a method to provide insight into mobility paths in the city. Through conversations with the Institutional Review Board, there were concerns that following homeless women throughout the city would pose a safety risk to me. IRB suggested I consider other methods like photovoice for understanding mobility paths and frequent places visited. By the time my research was underway, DRH already decided to relocate the sign-up list location and revamp the process. As a result, this collaborative component to my research

While my perspective may be limited both by the scope of this study and the length of my experience working within the shelter industry, I believe the findings of this thesis provide insight into problematics of the shelter system. Throughout the analysis chapter, I pointed to specific instances the women identified where shelter staff interactions contributed to the social exclusion that the women experienced. I do not intend to imply that the shelter staff are bad people. However, I believe these interactions highlight major flaws in the larger shelter institution. The shelter was dramatically understaffed in large part because of high stress work conditions that were accompanied by low wages. The staff worked long hours, with many of them also holding regular 40-hour work week jobs as well. The institutional policies and underfunding structured staff behavior in high-stress situations. Many of the shelter staff may not have necessarily viewed the shelter residents as children, despite their behavior leading Jessica to feel infantilized. Rather, the understaffing led to the need to maintain order and control and

this was one way in which the staff were able to do so. These institutionalized structures have an impact on the staff that end up reproducing pathologies of homeless people. While the staff were well-intentioned, I believe the larger managerial and institutional policies left many women at the shelter, including Jessica and Veronica, to improvising and testing survival strategies. For Jessica, resistance without creating actual conflict was successful. For Veronica, internalizing her pathologies as a recovering addict did not prove effective in navigating the structures in place. As a result, I would recommend further investigation into managerial practices and policy-level changes that do not continue the reproduction of homeless pathologies.

During my research and interviews, I did not ask specific questions about the two women's racialized experiences with their social exclusion from their homelessness. Therefore, I did not feel confident taking up race as a primary focus of analytical discussion. However, the findings of this thesis were surprising to me in that despite Veronica's privilege as a white woman, she remained homeless and Jessica, as a black woman, transitioned out of the shelter system into housing. I believe a closer look at race within the larger context of social exclusion that accompanies homelessness would be beneficial for anthropological understandings of homeless experiences. I would also recommend that the intersectionality of racial dynamics be a locus for future research and policy considerations. I believe a more in-depth, focused look at race and gender among those experiencing homelessness could provide interesting insight into potential problematics within the shelter industry that have not been previously considered.

I also took personal lessons from this research project. At the time of the conceptualization of this research project, one of my older brothers was experiencing homelessness and battling drug and alcohol addiction. On a personal level, conducting this research from an anthropological perspective afforded me the opportunity to better understand his experience. I am indebted to this research project for helping me in this regard. I am happy to say he is no longer homeless and has been drug and alcohol-free for over a year at the time of writing this thesis.

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## **APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Taylor Morrison will describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

### **Invitation to participate in a research study**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the homeless woman's experience. The study is funded by the University of Denver School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences' Humanities Institute. You are being asked to be in this research study because as a woman accessing the Women's Emergency Shelter, you have specific knowledge about this experience.

### **Description of subject involvement**

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Taylor including questions about your life story and your experience with homelessness. This will take between 30 minutes and two hours.

If you agree to continue the study past the first phase, you will be asked to participate in a photography project where you will be the photographer. You will receive one disposable camera in the beginning of the project. Taylor will spend 30 minutes explaining basics of photography if you do not already know them. You will be asked to use the camera creatively to take pictures of things, public places, and scenery during your daily routines that make you feel at home in Denver. You will be given one month to use up the camera, but you should feel free to use it in less than one month if you would like. When you have used up the camera, you will be asked to give it back to Taylor. Taylor will have the pictures developed for you. At the end of the project, you will be given all the photographs you take. When Taylor develops the first set of pictures, she will sit down with you to look through each of them, discussing the pictures that are most important to you and why. Taylor will also comment on photographic techniques you might be interested in using in future photography. This will take one to two hours. Taylor will give you another camera at the completion of this conversation, if you are interested in continuing the project. You will be given a maximum of one month to use up each camera. The same conversation will happen after the second camera, where Taylor will give you a third and final camera if you are interested in continuing the project. This will take one to two hours. When the photographs are developed from the final camera, Taylor will bring all of the pictures you took from the three cameras. You will receive the pictures you take at the end of the project, regardless of whether or not you choose to participate in the next phase of the project.

If you agree to continue past the third phase, Taylor will work with you to select four to six photographs to be used in a photography exhibit at the University of Denver's Museum of Anthropology Gallery (DUMA). This will take one to two hours. This



exhibit will take place over four weeks beginning in January 2015. Taylor will provide you with two RTD bus tickets so you may view your photographs on display at DUMA.

**Possible risks and discomforts**

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researcher is careful to avoid them. These risks may include the following emotional and/or psychological stress, inconvenience, and undesired media attention. Measures will be put into place to protect your privacy and confidentiality (see below), but there is still a small risk that a breach might occur.

**Possible benefits of the study**

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the unaccompanied woman's homeless experience in Denver. The photography project and the DUMA exhibit will provide you with an opportunity for creative expression, allow you the opportunity to receive recognition for your creative work, and give you a platform for your life story to be heard and shared.

If you agree to take part in this study, there may be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this study may help raise awareness about the Women's Emergency Shelter. In doing so, this may help them better serve your shelter needs. This will also fill a gap in academic literature because this type of research has not been done in Denver before.

**Study compensation**

You will not receive any payment for being in the study.

**Study cost**

You will be expected to pay for your own transportation, if needed.

**Confidentiality, Storage and future use of data**

To keep your information safe, Taylor has put in several safety measures in how she will store your information. During the interviews and photograph conversations, Taylor will take hand-written notes. The notes from your interviews and conversations will be stored in a secured file cabinet. All typed files and digital copies of your photographs will be kept on a secure cloud server accessed from a password-protected computer in password-protected files.

The physical copies of the photographs you take will be stored in a secured filing cabinet. The electronic copies of the photographs you take will be stored on a secure cloud server accessed from a password-protected computer in a password-protected file.

Taylor will keep the physical copy of the pictures until you have completed the project. Then the pictures will be given to you for you to do with as you please. Taylor will keep the digital copies of the pictures and written notes from the interviews until after the

museum exhibit is over and her thesis has been published. The museum staff will have access to the pictures during the exhibit design period..

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

However, we would like to give you the option to have your name included in the museum exhibit that results from this research project. We want to identify you to give you credit for your photographs. You have the option to not have your name or other identifiable information used; if this is the case, please indicate so on the last page of this form. If you do not wish to include your name in the exhibit, you may use your pseudonym for your pictures to be exhibited under or you may choose them to be exhibited as anonymous.

### **Who will see my research information?**

Although we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Both the records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by others.

Federal agencies that monitor human subject research  
Human Subject Research Committee

All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Also, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed; we may report that information to the appropriate agencies.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed.

### **Contact Information**

The researcher carrying out this study is Taylor Morrison. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may call Taylor at 936-661-6140.

If the researchers cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may contact the Office for Research Compliance by emailing [du-irb@du.edu](mailto:du-irb@du.edu), calling 303-871-4050 or in writing (University

of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121).

**Agreement to be in this study**

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I choose to be in this study. I will get a copy of this consent form.

Please initial here if you wish to have your name used in the museum exhibit resulting from the photography project. \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial here if you wish to have your pseudonym used in the museum exhibit resulting from the photography project. \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial this box if you wish to have your photos exhibited anonymously used in the museum exhibit resulting from the photography project. \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial this box if you do not wish to have your photographs used in the museum exhibit. \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial here and provide a valid email (or postal) address if you would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to you. (You may use the Women's Emergency Shelter address if you do not have a post office box.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (photographer's full name), hereby grant permission to Taylor Morrison, of the University of Denver Department of Anthropology, to reproduce any portion of the photo images listed below that have been taken by me for the purpose of EDUCATIONAL publications which can include but is not limited to: master's thesis, journal articles, University of Denver Museum of Anthropology (DUMA) exhibits, DUMA exhibit invitations, and DUMA museum websites.

I (circle one) DO / DO NOT request recognition be given to me. I understand that I will retain the copyright to my photograph(s) but that Taylor Morrison and DUMA may copy and/or modify the photograph(s) for in EDUCATIONAL publications. I also understand that material from this interview will only be used for educational purposes and will not be used to generate income of any kind. I do not grant permission to sell or use the photographs in a manner that would exploit or cause malicious representation toward me.

Permission granted for photographs listed below:

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Contact Information:

Taylor Morrison	M. Does Cruz	Christina Kreps
M.A. Graduate Student	Assistant Professor	Director of DUMA
University of Denver	University of Denver	University of Denver
Department of Anthropology	Department of Anthropology	Department of Anthropology
936-661-6140	303-871-2472	303-871-2688

Signed (photographer): \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed (photographer): \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_